

Five Egyptian Goddesses

Their Possible Beginnings,
Actions, and Relationships in the
Third Millennium BCE

Susan Tower Hollis



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With much appreciation and thanks to my long-time mentor and dear friend, Wolfgang Schwarz, Ph.D., who sadly did not live to see this work come to fruition.

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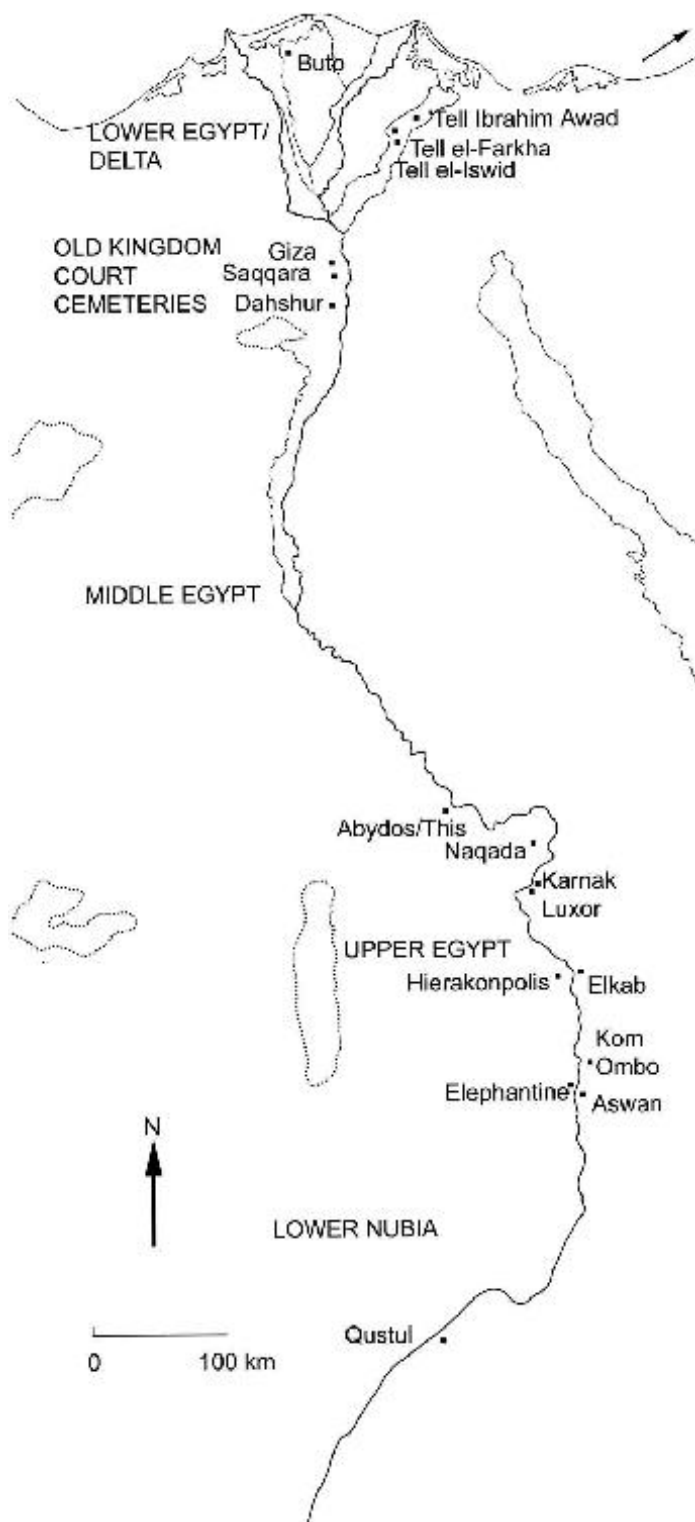
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Map 1 Map of ancient Egypt with major locations for fourth and third millennia BCE. Courtesy of Richard Bussmann.

Chronology¹

Predynastic Period (c. 5500–3100 _{BCE2}) Neolithic

Badarian, Naqada I, Naqada II

Dynasty 0 (c. 3100–2950 _{BCE}): Iry-Hor, Scorpion, others

Early Dynastic Period

1st Dynasty (c. 2950–2775 _{BCE}): Narmer, [☐]Aha, Djer, Den, [☐]Adj-ib, Semer-khet, Qa-[☐]a

2nd Dynasty (c. 2775–2650 _{BCE}): Hetep-Sekhemwy, Neb-Ra[☐], Ny-Netjer, Peribsen, Sekhem-ib, Sened, Nemtyemzaef II

Old Kingdom

3rd Dynasty (c. 2650–2575 _{BCE}): Djoser, Sekhem-khet, Kha[☐]bam Nebka, Huni

4th Dynasty (c. 2575–2450 _{BCE}): Snefru, Khufu, Radjedef, Bikheris, Khephren, Menkaure[☐], Shepseskaf

5th Dynasty (c. 2450–2325 _{BCE}): Userkhaf, Sahure[☐], Ra[☐]neferref, Shepseskhare[☐], Niuserre[☐], Menkauhor, Izesi, Wenis/Unit

6th Dynasty (c. 2325–2175 _{BCE}): Teti, Pepi I, Merenre[☐], Pepi II,

7th–8th Dynasties (c. 2175–2125 _{BCE})

First Intermediate Period (9th–part of the 11th Dynasties) (c. 2125–1986 _{BCE})

9th–10th Dynasties (c. 2125–1975 _{BCE}) Herakleopolitan

11th Dynasty (c. 2080–1975 _{BCE}) Theban

Middle Kingdom

11th Dynasty (c. 1975–1940 _{BCE}) all Egypt

12th Dynasty (c. 1940–1755 _{BCE})

13th Dynasty (c. 1755–1630 _{BCE})

14th Dynasty (contemporaneous with the 13th?)

Second Intermediate Period (15th–17th Dynasties) (c. 1630–1540 _{BCE})

15th Dynasty (c. 1630–1540 _{BCE}) Hyksos

16th Dynasty (c. 1630–1540 _{BCE}) minor Hyksos

17th Dynasty (c. 1630–1540 _{BCE}) Theban

New Kingdom

18th Dynasty (c. 1539–1295 _{BCE})

19th Dynasty (c. 1295–1186 _{BCE})

20th Dynasty (c. 1186–1069 _{BCE})

Third Intermediate Period: 21st–25th Dynasties (c. 1069–657 _{BCE})

Late Period: 26th–31st Dynasties (664–332 _{BCE})

Graeco-Roman Period (332 _{BCE} to 395 _{CE})

Alexander III, the Great (332–323 _{BCE})

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Of particular importance, despite not achieving the goal of being able to include an image and more information about the Early Dynastic small gold amulet of a bovine with its horns broken, with the Bat symbol hanging from its neck, found by George Reisner at Naga-ed-Dêr in the early twentieth century in tomb N 1532, and published initially

in 1908,¹ are a number of people who attempted to support the search and request. Among them are Professor of Egyptology Richard Parkinson, Fellow of Queen's College, Oriental Institute, University of Oxford; A. K. Eyma, moderator of the Egyptologists Electronic Forum; Susan Allen, Dr. Barbara Bell Research Associate for Egyptian Expedition Archives, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; and Mary Sadek, Deputy Director for Research and Government Affiliations, American Research Center in Cairo. Although the amulet is mentioned in work by Émile Vernier, and more recently by Cyril Aldred,² the precise museum number in the Cairo Museum remains unclear as it appears in relation to its "mate," an Oryx with the Tyet symbol hanging from its neck, the two listed as CG 53824-5. Despite our combined efforts, we were unable to clarify the exact museum number and get permission to use the image. Nevertheless, I appreciate their efforts on my behalf. We understand it is under study; I look forward to seeing the results.

Another special note goes to both Dr. Anna Garnett, Curator, Petrie Museum of Archaeology, University College London, and her Honorary Research Assistant, Ivor Pridden, and to Alice Howard, Ashmolean Picture Library, Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Oxford, and to Liam McNamara, Lisa and Bernard Salz Curator for Ancient Egypt and Sudan at the Ashmolean Museum and Director of the Griffith Institute, University of Oxford, for their invaluable assistance in sorting out the copyright issues related to the Hierakonpolis Bowl, parts of which are in the Ashmolean and part of which is in the Petrie. My work with these individuals and their institutions assisted in identifying clearly the locations of the fragments of this invaluable artifact for the current book, in a sense replicating and furthering the 1950s

collaboration between the two museums for the publication by Martin Burgess and Anthony Arkell of a reconstruction of this artifact. We are all delighted to have worked together to make this second collaboration and publication possible.

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Susan Tower Hollis
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Introduction

This book explores the earliest appearances and functions of five major Egyptian goddesses—Neith, Hathor, Nut, Isis, and Nephthys—who persisted as deities and were important in the religious sphere from their initial appearances by the last quarter of the third millennium BCE through the end of Egyptian history. A sixth goddess, Bat, is discussed briefly in her connection with Hathor. The possible origins of these goddesses have been understudied until now, and their earliest appearances have commonly been disputed. Each of them shows very close ties to royalty and, in the case of Neith and Hathor, each carries special connections to early queens that are expressed in images as well as in written form. I began work on these goddesses in a paper presentation over thirty years ago as part of a feminist day at the 1986 Annual Meeting of the American Folklore Society in which I asked if the apparently prominent place of women in ancient Egypt derived from the role of Nut as sky goddess, resulting in an article published about a year later.¹ I have continued to study these deities over the ensuing decades, giving and occasionally publishing a series of papers on the subject.²

In general, studies of the origins and early presence of these goddesses have been lacking, save a statement by a classical scholar that Isis was “[there] in the beginning.”³ In fact, no certain attestations of her appear prior to the Fifth Dynasty, while two other goddesses clearly appear earlier: Neith, whose presence is known from at least the First

Dynasty, and Hathor, who appears definitely as Hathor by the Fourth Dynasty and perhaps earlier. These two, along with Nut and Nephthys, perhaps the most understudied of these major deities, have received considerably less attention than Isis, whom scholars have studied in some depth, particularly in her New Kingdom and later appearances, with special attention paid to her in the Graeco-Roman world. In fact, none has received much, if any, attention regarding her origin, activities, roles, or early manifestations prior to the Middle Kingdom.

The resources for this study include archaeological materials such as seals, sealings, and serekhs; palettes; temple and tomb reliefs; sculptures; personal names; titles mentioning the deity, commonly related to being a priestess or priest; and finally texts, most particularly the Pyramid Texts (see Figure I.1), the name given to that body of texts that was carved over the course of about 200 years in the pyramids of Unis, the last king of the Fifth Dynasty; Kings Teti, Pepi I, Merenre, and Pepi II of the Sixth Dynasty; King Ibi of the Eighth Dynasty; and five queens of the Sixth Dynasty as known to date, and which date from the last years of the twenty-fourth century to the last years of the twenty-second century BCE. Indeed, it is the major written resource we have from this time. All five goddesses along with Bat appear in the Pyramid Texts, although Neith, Hathor, and Bat show up very minimally. Indeed, Neith and Hathor are the earliest attested of the deities to appear in securely dated contexts, though Bat, early (mis)identified as Hathor, appears earlier in a securely dated context than any of the five under study here and will be discussed in an excursus specific to her. The other three goddesses, Nut, Isis, and Nephthys, appear initially and very prominently in the Pyramid Texts.

The Pyramid Texts fill several functions in relation to

deceased royalty: first, they seek to effect the individual's journey to the next world through his or her⁴ transformation into an *akh* (a transfigured spirit who lives fully in the next world); and second, they provide protection for the corpse, the mummy, in the tomb. They also serve to identify the deceased with several deities, most notably Osiris and the Sun/sun god Re, as the deceased seeks to join with these deities on their daily journey of rebirth.

First discovered in 1880, the Pyramid Texts have engaged scholars in study ever since, specifically with questions about their purpose, use, and origin. In fact, close study shows that the texts that appear in the pyramids had varied original purposes, that is, not all originated specifically for mortuary purposes, and it is quite clear they were not all limited to royalty but were used by non-royal individuals as well, some even originating in non-royal contexts.⁵ Furthermore, they come from different times and different places, despite their first comprehensive and securely dated appearances in Unis's pyramid at the end of the Fifth Dynasty.⁶ Likewise, the title "Pyramid Texts" does not truly explain either their origins or their importance, for they form part of a body of mortuary or funerary literature⁷ that continues throughout Egyptian history. There are many variants and developments of these texts, including being copied onto coffins (the so-called the Coffin Texts); on papyri, as in the Book of the Dead; and in the so-called mythological papyrii, extending into the Greco-Roman Period.⁸



Figure I.1 Wall and ceiling of part of Unis's burial chamber, showing the star ceiling and some of the Pyramid Texts. Photo by DEA/G. DAGLI ORTI/De Agostini/Getty Images 122320286.

Close examination of the texts shows that no single pyramid replicates exactly the set of texts in any other pyramid, either in location, purpose, or actual wording. The lack of any consistent pattern in location may be attributed in large part to the different sizes and even shapes of the spaces within the pyramids themselves. For example, Unis's pyramid, the oldest and most compact of the kings' pyramids, contains the fewest texts. At the same time, the texts in Unis's pyramid show the most uniformity of all the funerary collections and were considered canonical by the ancient Egyptians themselves, for nearly all the texts from his pyramid appear in the later royal pyramids. The tomb of Pepi I, the largest of the Old Kingdom royal pyramids, not only contains the most texts but also the most varied, while the pyramid of Queen

Neith, a wife of Pepi II, has, like queens' tombs generally, only a single inscribed chamber and therefore considerably limited wall space for textual use, and thus includes, like other queens' tombs, even fewer texts than appear in Unis's pyramid. Despite these differences, however, certain spells and groups of spells occur more commonly in one location than another, most particularly in the burial chamber and on the sarcophagus, though only Teti, the first king of the Sixth Dynasty, includes what we call Pyramid Texts on his sarcophagus. For example, spells relating to Nut appear mostly in the burial chamber. Overall, however, despite expectations of where any particular text (such as a ritual text) "should" be, according to its content, the texts do not necessarily appear in the "right" places.⁹

Obviously such variety suggests that those who made the decisions—and who made them can only be surmised because it is not made clear anywhere, but would have been someone such as Imhotep, the overseer for building Djoser's pyramid in the Third Dynasty, perhaps in consultation with the king and quite probably in consultation with close advisors to the king, such as priests—had the ability to make choices about which texts were used and where they were located.¹⁰ Such individuals worked from collections available to them, perhaps on writing boards or even papyrus. There is no question, however, that some kind of predecessors existed; the texts have a prehistory, a backstory, that leads up to their first written occurrence at the end of the Fifth Dynasty. Thus in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries CE, scholars have increasingly questioned the origins and developments of the texts that resulted in the texts as we know them today.¹¹

Contemporary study of the texts shows that the basic

origin of the texts lies in rituals related to funerary activities that, John Baines has observed, were “sustained orally for long periods of time before being written down.”¹² That an earlier oral tradition lies behind at least some of the written texts can be deduced from the use of the Egyptian phrase *ḏd-mdw* (recitation), which comprises the opening words for a number of texts in Unis’s pyramid as well as many in later pyramids, suggesting the various texts were read or recited and thus formed the basis of contemporary oral, ritual, and performance traditions.¹³ But even without the the *ḏd-mdw* beginnings, the nature and style of the texts—many of which are quite rhythmic, even poetic—show clear parallelism, which generally suggests original orality. In addition, the clear ritual function of many of the texts suggests they have both an oral and performance background.¹⁴ As originally oral materials, they would have been ephemeral with a long history.

Baines has suggested that the forerunner to written forms of the Pyramid Texts lies in the offering lists of the mortuary temple of King Sahure,¹⁵ the second king of the Fifth Dynasty, noting that the phraseology of these lists resembles some of those that appear in the Pyramid Texts, phrases that “were ‘activated’ by the insertion of verbal forms.”¹⁶ He has further suggested that written forms might go as far back as the late Second or early Third Dynasty when the first attestations of speeches by divinities appear, pointing specifically to evidence concerning a lector priest from the reign of Ni-Netjer in the mid-Second Dynasty. Although within his discussion of orality and performance of the Pyramid Texts and their possible forebears, Baines has suggested that short manuscripts of ritual texts “were assembled and modified *ad hoc*,”¹⁷ he does not address who might have done so or

proposed any ideas about how the assembled texts were transferred to the walls of the pyramids.¹⁸ Nevertheless, various texts themselves suggest copying from some portable source such as writing boards, papyri, or other kinds of material since we find some interesting anomalies within various texts.¹⁹ For example, a text from Unis's pyramid omits the king's name,²⁰ as evident in James P. Allen's translation: "You belong, WHOEVER,²¹ to that god of whom Atum's twins said: 'You are distinguished,' they said, 'in your identity of a god'" (PT Utt. 215, §147a).²² In another rather amusing text from Queen Neith's pyramid, a similar instance of copying occurs in which the copyist was seemingly unaware of the tomb owner's gender, a text which obviously works for the tombs of the kings but is clearly misused for the female Queen Neith: "The nose of Neith has air, his penis has semen, like the one mysterious of form in the midst of the sunlight" (PT Utt. 493, §1061b). Of course, it is possible the text from which the copyist was working had not been modified appropriately, and we can legitimately question if the copyist was actually able to read and understand the hieroglyphs.

Thus by the time we get to the texts written on the walls of the sarcophagus chamber, the passage, and the antechamber of Unis's pyramid at the end of the Fifth Dynasty, a considerable history of the texts had already occurred in both written and oral forms. Of course, no solid evidence of orality will ever be found, save in the sense of recitation seen in the Pyramid Texts themselves and the few attestations of related written discourse that appear prior to Unis.

Finally, perhaps the most striking element of the Pyramid Texts, as a whole, is their lack of unity as a corpus. They definitely do not present a coherent mythology. Such is not surprising, however, for two main reasons. The first

is their purpose as already noted: to facilitate the deceased's journey to the next world in the form of an *akh*, including protecting the body in the tomb from any inimical beings, and identifying the deceased with both Osiris and the Sun. The second reason derives from their development and use over a period of time, as the nearly two centuries between the first appearance of these texts in Unis's pyramid at the end of the Fifth Dynasty and their appearance in the pyramid of the Eighth Dynasty King Ibi allows for changes in practice and emphasis. This is clear, even without accounting for evidence that suggests their origins in earlier royal and non-royal sources and the effect of oral transmission, steady as that tends to be in a largely oral culture like ancient Egypt.²³ Similar issues arise in scriptural documents from many other traditions, such as ancient India, the biblical world including the Bible itself, and the Muslim world including the Quran and Hadith. Variety in time, place, and practice lead naturally to the inclusion of differences, and while oral tradition is far more stable than modern commentators realize, it does very rarely, if truly ever, retain absolute fidelity.

An important point to note here concerns the concept of religion and religious belief. In ancient Egypt, as in other ancient cultures, ritual action provided the foundation of any relationship to the divine world. Thus temples did not serve as places of worship but rather as locations where it is understood a deity might choose to manifest him- or herself. Rituals meant the location was always ready for the deity to become present, and caring for the statue—in which said deity might be comfortable—controlled the practice of temple personnel.²⁴ Thus the recitation of spells and related texts similarly dictated the action of priests, suggesting that religion was rooted not in belief but in action; that is, performance combined with an assumed

possession of particular knowledge by the deceased enabled him to achieve the next life.²⁵ Indeed, using the terms “belief” and “religion” in discussion of ancient times is questionable, since ritual performance played such a great part.²⁶

As noted, all the goddesses in the following discussion appear in the Pyramid Texts, though the appearances of Neith and Hathor, even Bat, are minimal, so we learn about them from artifacts used in daily life, suggesting that their importance lay in earthly realms. Nut, Isis, and Nephthys, however, appear extensively in these texts and minimally, if at all, in artifacts other than tombs up through the end of the Old Kingdom. Thus the following discussion will range from life roles to mortuary roles of each of the deities, beginning with Neith.

Neith

Among the goddesses under study, Neith is probably the least well known and studied.¹ In good measure, this results from the fact she is not part of the so-called Ennead—the body of nine deities known at the Lower Egyptian town of Heliopolis—and from the fact that her role in the mortuary world, from which we have the most information about deities, particularly in the earliest periods, was minimal throughout history. She is also less well known because in a real sense she bookends the deities of ancient Egypt’s religious history: she flourished in its earliest periods, appeared to go underground for several millennia, and reappeared very strongly, beginning with the Saïte Period, that is, the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty, in the mid-seventh century BCE and continuing into the Graeco-Roman Period. However, as Stan Hendrickx has so aptly stated regarding her earliest period, “Although Neith is one of the most important divinities throughout Egyptian history, her popularity may never have been greater than it was during the Protodynastic Period.”² Thus the currently known materials attesting to her and her activities come mainly from the earliest periods of Egyptian history and then again beginning with the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty, the Saïte Period, and into the Graeco-Roman Period.

From these earliest periods, we have a relative abundance of material attesting to her, her power, and her activities, giving us a picture of this deity’s popularity at all levels of the population for which we have documents. It is

important to recall, however, that such documents from an ancient culture are truly an accident of find, and as ongoing archaeological work amply demonstrates, much continues to be discovered, sometimes even through the excavations of museum basements. And although I will draw only in a limited way from the other end of her history, the Late Period, including the Graeco-Roman Period, provides us with temples not only of hers but of those dedicated to others in which she receives cult. Using this late material, along with what is available from the Middle and New Kingdoms as well as the so-called Intermediate Periods, must be done with caution, although the temptation is to see her later forms and actions as always there. Despite the general thinking that ancient Egypt did not change over the millennia—after all, the pyramids from an early time lost only their outer stones—in fact, Egypt did change during the millennia, as did understandings about its deities and its religious practices.

My discovery of Neith came as I was questioning why women in ancient Egypt apparently had considerable rights in comparison with contemporaneous cultures of the ancient eastern Mediterranean world. This research revealed not only that Neith was present in some of the early hieroglyphic material dating from the first two dynasties of Egypt but that several First Dynasty queens bore names using hers, in what we know as theophoric names, that is, names incorporating that of a deity, and the names of two of those queens appeared occasionally as the part of royal serekhs, the symbol designating the ruler. Significantly the figure on top of the serekh is always the symbol of a deity, and the deity's presence suggests either that the designated ruler serves as an intermediary between the deity and the ruler's people or claims descent from that deity. Mostly commonly the figure atop the

serekh body is the falcon god Horus, but in rare instances, symbols designating the mythical canid Seth, or Horus and Seth together, or the even rarer sign of the object with crossed arrows that designates Neith are present. The possibility of a serekh for a queen intrigued me in my study of goddesses and women and thus led both to this chapter and to the idea for the whole book.

In the case of Neith, there are several hieroglyphic signs³ that are specific to her, and it is an examination of each of these that will open this chapter. We will then look at her appearance, notably in anthropomorphic form, including a review of her in relation to queens and kings and including the crowns of Egypt, most notably the Red Crown. Subsequently I will examine her position in connection with non-royals who held a status such that they had the wherewithal to leave documents with their names and/or their offices on materials that have lasted through the millennia. It must be understood that such people, though not of royal background, were clearly of the elite, generally officials in the court or in other significant administrative roles. Such documents provide critical sources for knowing more about Neith and her importance. During the Old Kingdom, which begins with the Third Dynasty,⁴ we find she begins to receive cult, so looking at those who serve her will form another piece of this discussion. Because some of those serving Neith also served another deity or served her in a temple or mortuary area primarily honoring a different deity—sometimes paired with a male deity and at other times functioning along with other female deities—we will look briefly at such relationships as well. This understanding leads naturally to discussion of her cosmogonic activities, a discussion that technically moves beyond the defined time period of the Early Dynastic and Old Kingdom, although I will argue, it is likely

rooted in the very early periods—the Predynastic and Protodynastic periods—as Egypt was becoming a unified state with the beginning of writing, and the inception of other cultural features that would characterize pharaonic Egypt in its long history. The chapter will conclude with a brief presentation of Neith’s position in the mortuary world. From this point, her role—or lack of it—in the mortuary realm will occupy a short discussion.

Neith’s signs

Neith as one of the oldest major goddesses of Egypt, going back to at least to the Protodynastic and Early Dynastic Periods if not earlier, comes to visibility during the time when hieroglyphic writing was developing, and the earliest signs that signify Neith appeared. It seems that the earliest signs clearly designating something other than actions by animals or people were those that signified the nomes, the ancient geographic areas of Egypt. Occasionally these signs represent the deity linked to the nome in question, and such is the case with Neith. Generally these signs appear on the tops of what look like flagpoles, called standards, two Predynastic/Protodynastic examples of which for Neith depict these crossed arrows with a ribbon hanging below them. These two examples (see Figure 1.1a) come from the impressions made by early cylinder seals, that is artifacts with writing impressed in clay by a cylinder seal, though rarely is the seal still available. This symbol of the crossed arrows is the earliest we have for Neith and dates most probably to the Naqada II Period (c. 3600–3350 BCE).⁵ Unfortunately the dating of such seal impressions is generally not known due to a lack of provenance, that is, where and in what context the seal impression was found.⁶ Another form of the crossed arrows sign (see Figure 1.1b)

comes from a sherd found in the Fifth Dynasty sun-temple of King Niuserre and provides clear evidence of the very basic standard with only the crossed arrows in its first clear register, lacking the hanging ribbon seen in the earlier example. The second register of this sherd provides a second example of a Neith sign, a depiction of two bows, the kind that are used in archery, in a case, while a related sign appears on a vase found in the step pyramid of King Djoser, the first king of the Third Dynasty. This sign depicts two unstrung bows joined at their ends sitting on top of the goddess's head as a headdress (see Figure 1.2).

The third symbol or cult sign of Neith represents a kind of figure eight with a pair of arrows crossing it (see Figure 1.3). It is known as a bilobate object and appears on standards in the Protodynastic Period, a time which saw the appearance of major towns, increasing social complexity, and evidence of royalty, royal courts, and rituals, and continues to be used up through the end of the Old Kingdom. Interestingly it did not continue beyond that time in its original form. The bilobate object appears in its most detailed form on part of a small greywacke palette in Brussels (Brussels E. 6261) of unknown provenance, though thought to be from Abydos, on which two beetles are depicted in low relief with striations shown very clearly on the back of the beetles' bulbous abdomens covered by their elytra or wings. In 1931, Ludwig Keimer, an entomologist, identified the pair of beetles on the top as *Agrypnus notodonta* Latr., more popularly known as click beetles. In the same publication, he described the iconographic neighboring figure on the palette as a shield supported by a staff and crossed by a pair of arrows, thus essentially describing a standard such as seen in nome signs.⁷ However, in 1996, Stan Hendrickx, working directly with the palette itself in Brussels, observed that the so-called

shield is rather comprised of the abdomens of two click beetles covered by the elytra joined together with a pair of arrows tied across the join—what we now refer to as the bilobate sign—while the whole represents a temple of Neith at Saïs.⁸ A related artifact in Brussels, E.578, a shallow oval plate comprised of pieces of greywacke fitted together, depicts part of the same type of beetle but in a kind of personified form that has arms and hands in which it holds two scepters, one clearly a wꜥs-scepter, which is characteristically known from other sources to be held by Neith at least since the Second Dynasty, suggesting that this plate served as an emblem of the goddess. This identification has been confirmed by the recent discovery of an additional fragment (see Figure 1.4).⁹



Figure 1.1a Predynastic/Protodynastic seal impressions with crossed arrow

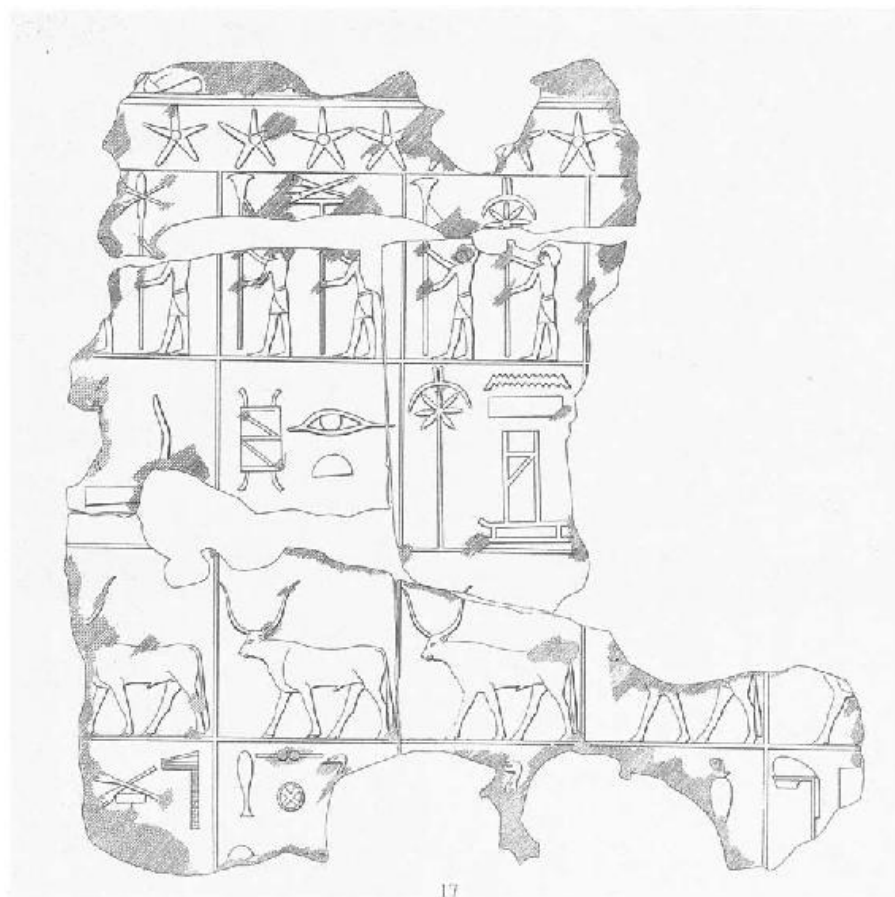


Figure 1.1b Fragment of a god list with Neith standard showing simply the crossed arrows and, in the register below, a second symbol of Neith: two bows in a carrying case. From the Fifth Dynasty sun-temple of Ne-Weser-Re. Friedrich Wilhelm Frieher von Bissing.

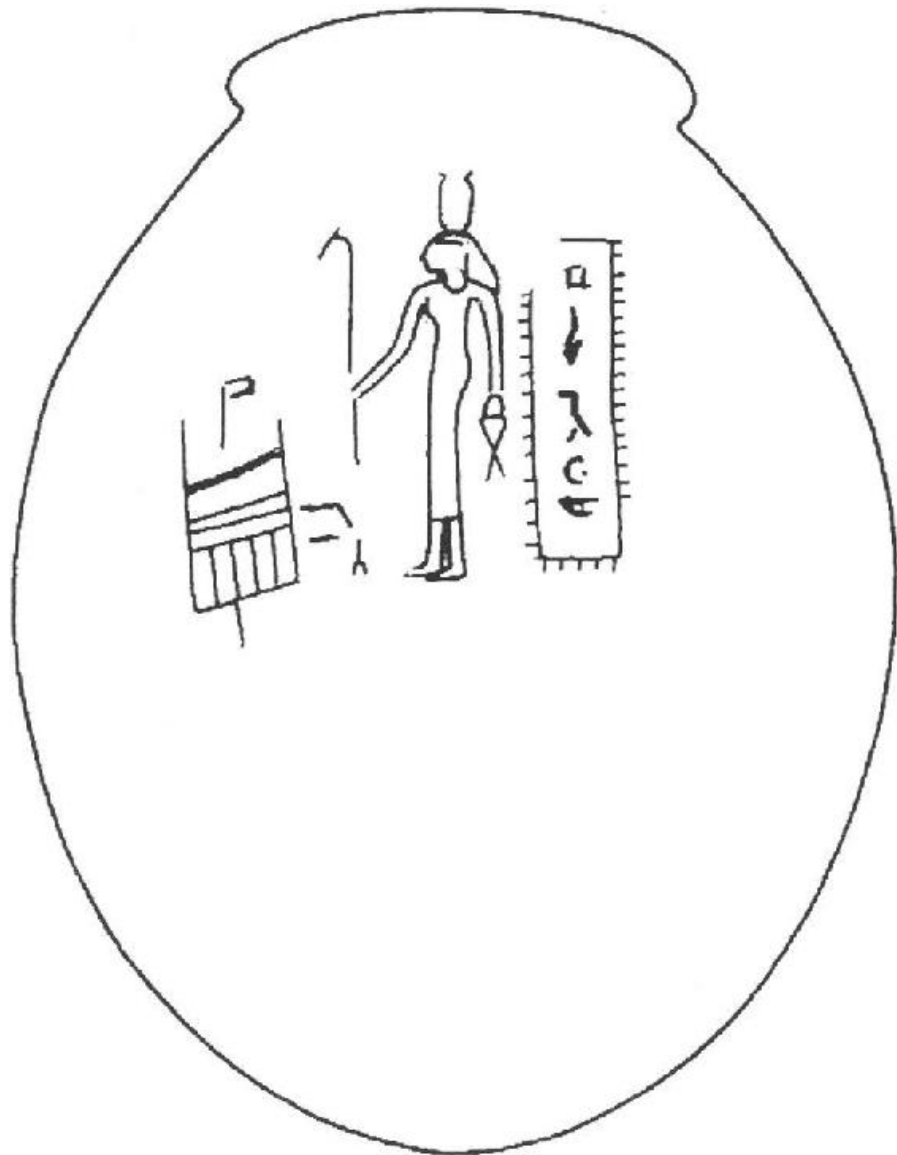


Figure 1.2 Vase from the time of Ni-Netjer (Second Dynasty) found in Djoser's pyramid at Saqqara (Third Dynasty). © IFAO.



Figure 1.3 Fragment of a model temple for Neith, Naqada III (First Dynasty) (c. 3300–2900 BCE), Greywacke. Musées Royaux d’Art et d’Histoire, Brussels E.6261. © RMAH, Brussels.



Figure 1.4 Fragment of a bowl with a carved relief of an anthropomorphized beetle, First Dynasty, reign of Den (c. 3000 BCE). Musées d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels E.578. © RMAH, Brussels.

In sum, these three distinct signs relate specifically to Neith in these early periods, the oldest being a pair of crossed arrows, either by themselves or on a standard, while the next sign depicts what we call a bilobate figure, now known to be a Coleoptera beetle rather than a shield,

with arrows crossing. Finally, the third early symbol of Neith, one which initially appeared at the end of the First Dynasty,¹⁰ is comprised of two unstrung bows placed back to back, often in a kind of case (see Figure 1.1b; Figure 1.2). The use of arrows or the pair of bows to signify Neith from the very earliest time has led to her designation as a warrior goddess, that is, a goddess of war and/or hunting,¹¹ though there is no mythology or other kind of narrative that suggests she was a warrior or even a hunter from the Early Dynastic and Old Kingdom Periods or, in fact, any other period of Egyptian history. Thus referring to her at any point as a warrior deity is highly questionable. Furthermore, the crossed arrows and the unstrung bows appear together only from the Old Kingdom on, while the bilobate object never occurs with the double bow after the Old Kingdom.

Neith and royalty

The link between Neith and royalty began at least during the Protodynastic/Early Dynastic Period. It is seen in two different serekhs, each naming a woman in the space devoted to the ruler's name: Neith-Hetep and Meret-Neith, both First Dynasty queens. The serekh itself is a rectangular figure that looks rather like a building façade consisting of three parts: a lower section that includes a doorway-type indentation; a middle part placed over the door as a lintel that includes the ruler's name; and lastly, a space above the whole on which an image of the ruler's deity is placed. This position of the ruler's name—in this case a queen's name, though usually a king's—above the door and below the deity emphasizes the ruler as the mediator between the divine world and that of humanity. In the case of both Neith-Hetep and Meret-Neith, Neith's

bilobate sign with the arrows takes the place of the expected male deity.

Since the use of serekhs is limited to rulers, that these two queens had them suggests that each served as a queen regent for an underage royal heir at some point in her life. Each also had large-sized tombs in Upper Egypt similar to those of kings: Neith-Hetep's at Naqada (see Figure 1.5), initially identified as that of a king; and Meret-Neith's at Abydos, the necropolis of most First Dynasty rulers, also initially identified as that of a king.¹² Neith-Hetep was associated with Hor-Aha and Djer, and possibly Narmer, while Meret-Neith was certainly the mother of Den, as attested by a sealing with a list of five kings of the First Dynasty found in the tomb of Den at Abydos, in which she is identified as his mother,¹³ as she also is on the Palermo Stone, a key Fifth Dynasty artifact providing information about ancient Egyptian kings for the first five dynasties and perhaps earlier. In addition, she was likely the wife of Djet and possibly the daughter of Djer.¹⁴ This latter possibility, a truly fascinating one, derives from an interesting double sealing that presents her serekh beside that of Djer, found in Saqqara tomb 3503 of an unknown person but likely an individual important in the administration of the time (see Figure 1.6) of which there are thirteen known examples.¹⁵ Not only is a double serekh unusual, but the presence of a known queen's serekh alongside that of a king who is likely her father is also extraordinary. While it is generally understood that Meret-Neith was associated with Kings Djer, Djet, and Den—likely the mother of the latter,¹⁶ and several scholars have suggested that Meret-Neith was Djer's heir¹⁷—any further discussion of this sealing is notably absent.¹⁸

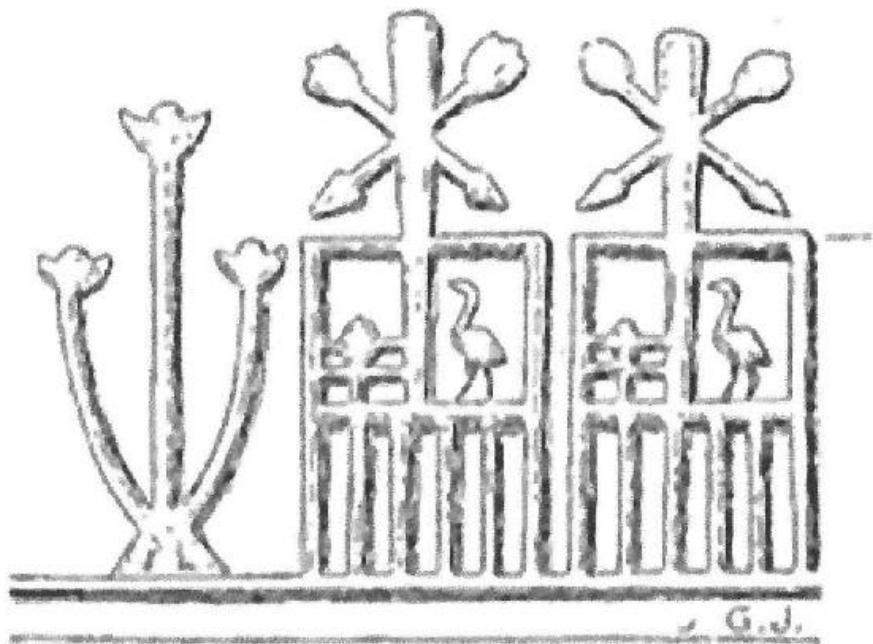


Figure 1.5 Serekh of Hetep-Neith, First Dynasty, Queen and Queen Regnant from her Naqada tomb. Jacques de Morgan.

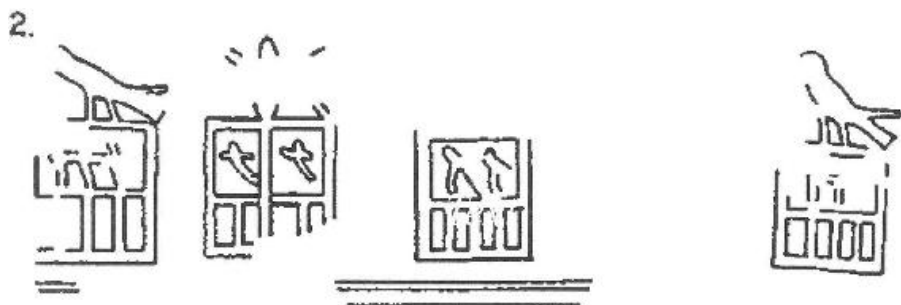


FIG. 226

Figure 1.6 Sealing of a pair of serekhs: Meret-Neith and Djer from Saqqara Tomb 3503. Courtesy of the Egyptian Exploration Society.

Aside from the presence of many examples of Neith-Hetep's name,¹⁹ discussion of her as queen regent for an underage male heir is remarkably lacking, even in light of the recent discovery of her name inscribed on a rock wall

in the Sinai at Wadi Ameyra, pointing to her importance early in the First Dynasty as a queen/queen regent.²⁰ In fact, Silke Roth has even questioned who this individual really is, suggesting that Neith-Hetep, alternatively Hetep-Neith, might have been a son of Aha, the first king of the First Dynasty.²¹ Roth, however, apparently does not take into consideration that this individual bore the epithet *smꜣyt nbwy*, the “one who unites the two Lords,” that is, Horus and Seth, a queen’s epithet,²² which might well lead her to revise her point. On the other hand, Meret-Neith’s role as queen regent is made very clear on both the contemporary sealing listing her among First Dynasty kings and on the Palermo Stone, each of which suggests that at least during her time and shortly after she was remembered, although as the mother of Den²³ rather than as acting ruler.

While it is impossible to assert definitively just why Neith’s bilobate sign crowns the serekhs of these two queens, I can suggest that as women, it was more appropriate to have them related to a goddess rather than a god. Even as the ruling king was the Horus king, the queen was the Neith queen, thus providing a sense of parallel relation with and descent from the divine world: Horus for males and Neith for females. In fact, this idea is made explicit in the Inca world in which a single androgynous deity serves as the source of the sun, male, and the moon, female, with respectively the king as the closest male descendant and the queen as the closest female descendant.²⁴ I thus suggest the same concept is likely to be present among the ancient Egyptians in very early times, with complementary powers represented at this time by the deities atop the serekhs: Neith and Horus. Assuming such to be the case, the presence of two First Dynasty queens’ names in Neith serekhs initially raises the conceptual possibility that the very earliest ruling queens

shared in divinity even as kings did. Each is presumed to have ruled with no male beside her, thus allowing, if not demanding, her use of the serekh, but the Neith serekh rather than the traditional Horus serekh. Furthermore, as Lana Troy notes explicitly, numerous examples of queens exist which use the symbols of kingship, in particular a queen's use of the serekh during her time as queen regent, but also other symbols as well, for which we see notable artifacts from the tomb of Queen Hetepheres I, wife of Snefru and mother of Khufu of the Fourth Dynasty.²⁵ However, despite the serekh, Neith-Hetep also bears the title *smꜣy(t) nbwy*, consort of the Two Lords,²⁶ the Two Lords representing Horus and Seth, thus defining her in relation to her royal husband. Were there evidence of a corresponding epithet or title for the contemporary king, that is one placing him in relation to his queen, we would then be able to speak truly of an equality between the two, but apparently none exists. Thus we must conclude that in general, an equality of divinity between the king and the queen does not exist in this society. Nevertheless, the appearance of the queen's name in the Neith serekh attests to the queen's divine rulership under specific circumstances, either as regent or as sole ruler, that is, as ruler equal to the king as ruler, albeit when no male is on the throne.

Yet to be noted is that other First Dynasty women bearing Neith names had close relations to the king besides the two with the Neith serekhs, perhaps the most notable of whom was Her-Neith, a consort of Djer's who had a large tomb at Saqqara. She, like Neith-Hetep, bore the epithet *smꜣy(t) nbwy*. Other women associated with First Dynasty kings (but not consorts) also bore Neith names: Nakht-Neith, also associated with Djer; Neith, a Sixth Dynasty wife of Pepi II; along with Neith-Hetep, a king's daughter; and

Qaienneith, also a king's daughter. For these latter two we lack further information, but they are understood to be from the Early Dynastic Period.²⁷

Another point of inquiry asks what, if any, was the effect on the female of her relation to the king, especially in the context of his special relationship to the divine world? Time and again in various cultures, the transforming effect of human relationships with the divine world appears. Traditional narratives alone suggest such: eating and drinking in the divine world, for example, was thought to result in immortality, as the Akkadian narrative of Adapa and the South Wind suggests.²⁸ Sexual relationships especially affect the recipient, be that person male or female, and we see it in Greek mythology as well as mythologies of other ancient eastern Mediterranean cultures in addition to the Akkadian, such as among the Ugaritic and Hittite peoples. The special, although variable, relation of the Egyptian king to the world of the gods, no matter the time period of Egyptian history, would have affected the spouse, at least conceptually. Nothing in Egyptian literature suggests any effect, however, despite the fact that the last, and sadly incomplete, tale in the Westcar Papyrus tells of the birth of three kings of the Fifth Dynasty borne by the wife of a priest of Re, and the much later narratives with depictions of the divine conception of the king by the god Amun. Indeed, as already noted, while Meret-Neith appeared among the kings in the early seal noted above, even on the Fifth Dynasty Palermo Stone, she no longer appears as a ruling queen but only as mother of the king.

This evidence suggests the loss of status by queens as the Early Dynastic and early Old Kingdom progressed, which is supported by Rainer Stadelmann in his discussion of the queens' graves and the pyramid precinct in which he

provides interesting and provocative archaeological evidence supporting the decline of the queen's position relative to the king and royal ideology with the beginning of the Old Kingdom in the Third Dynasty. He observes that from the near parity of the size and decoration of queens' tombs in the First Dynasty, even the firm locations of queens' tombs remain uncertain beginning with the Second Dynasty, and from the beginning of the Third Dynasty, we have no clue as to where any queens were buried until we get to the time of Khufu early in the Fourth Dynasty, the owner of the Great Pyramid, at which time one finds small pyramids for some royal wives located near the royal pyramids. Stadelmann suggests that the change derives from the increased development of the kingship to a divine or an approximately divine position as contrasted to being an intermediary between the divine and earthly worlds, thus leading to a progressive subordination of the queen; that is, an increasing emphasis on the king's divinity occurs at the expense of the queen, leading to a greater emphasis on her humanity, her connection to the human, earthly world.²⁹

Neith's relationship with the king shows directly in additional ways throughout Egyptian history. Arguably the most important relationship derives from her role as kingmaker, one exhibited in different contexts over the entirety of Egyptian history. Perhaps most clearly, this idea appears in "Contendings of Horus and Seth," a mythic narrative dated to the Twentieth Dynasty. In one section, she directs the deities of Ennead, who contacted her to request her advice on the choice of Horus or Seth as ruler, to "Give the office of Osiris to his son Horus ... or I will be angry and the sky will meet the ground,"³⁰ thus destroying the universe if the Ennead does not follow her will. Here she is actually acting as kingmaker. Similarly, half a

millennium later in the naos of the grand temple of Philae dating from the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty (664–525 BCE), Neith responds to the king facing her, saying, “I give you the internal country, as a king, without changing its limits, as Saïs depends on Neith.”³¹ This anticipates the section of her ritual hymn from Esna from the Ptolemaic Period (305–31 BCE)³² stating that “she chooses who pleases her to be king, eternally, as Horus on the serekh.”³³

While these documents come from far outside the time period of the early Neith under discussion here, they seem to reflect an understanding of her that goes back at least to the Second Dynasty, if not earlier. From this early time, one theophoric name, *Smn-sw N.t-šps*, “Neith and the ruling (god) establish him,”³⁴ suggests she has some type of power to affirm a person’s existence or vitality, perhaps the king’s, further supporting her relationship to royalty. A true affirmation of such a role appears on a small vase found in Djoser’s Third Dynasty Step Pyramid at Saqqara,³⁵ which shows Neith in anthropomorphic form—the first known such appearance for any deity; she is recognizable by her headdress of two unstrung bows—standing and holding a *wšs*-scepter, a symbol of power and dominion, carried initially only by deities, in her right hand and an ankh-sign, the sign of life, in her left (see Figure 1.2). She is facing an incomplete serekh that lacks its top but which appears to read *Nj-ntr*, the third king of the Second Dynasty. Neith is ready to give the divine gifts of life, the ankh, and rule, the *wšs*-scepter, to the king, a common motif in depicting the relation of Egyptian kings with deities. Behind her is a kind of enclosure in which there is a hieroglyphic inscription of *R^{cf}-nb*, the second king of the same dynasty.

Quite possibly this interaction portrays an affirmation of *Nj-ntr* as a legitimate king via Neith’s role as a royal

goddess, perhaps necessary due to political and/or religious challenges in the Second Dynasty.³⁶ Another artifact, a fragment also from Saqqara, presents the serekh of the First Dynasty king Djet facing a pair of crossed arrows and two linked unstrung bows, again symbols of Neith, similarly suggesting a particular relation of the king to the goddess.³⁷

Then from the Third Dynasty context of the step pyramid of Djoser/Netjery-Khet, the dynasty's first king, comes a lovely alabaster artifact referred to as a Jubilee Vase (see Figure 1.7),³⁸ which provides us with a complementary understanding of Neith in relation to the king, not so much perhaps as kingmaker but rather as supportive of his continuing kingship. The Jubilee aspect refers to its connection to the king's Sed Festival,³⁹ which celebrates the completion of a number of years of successful rule, commonly thirty, and expresses hope for another thirty years in the role—although commonly understood as thirty, in reality variable⁴⁰—and thus representing essentially a rejuvenation or renewal of the king.⁴¹ Its handle, beginning at its base, portrays a Heh figure, a hieroglyphic sign standing for a million years, which supports the two celebratory booths, one representing Upper Egypt, or southern Egypt and the other Lower Egypt, northern Egypt, used in this royal renewal festival. Significantly the whole is topped by a very distinct Coleoptera beetle.⁴² Since at this point, this beetle “belongs” to Neith, as the artifacts discussed earlier show, here it certainly functions as representing her affirmation of the king's celebration and hope for continued renewals.



Figure 1.7 Jubilee Vase from Djoser's Third Dynasty Step Pyramid (JE 64872) with Heb-Sed symbols and Coleoptera beetle at the top of the handle. Photo by De Agostini/Getty Images 182132267.

Neith has also been linked to the king through the Red Crown, traditionally associated with Lower Egypt. Its first known appearance occurs on a pottery sherd from a black-topped pot, on which appears the form of what is later

known as the Red Crown in raised outline. Excavated by William Flinders Petrie from Upper Egyptian Naqada tomb 1610 and now in the Ashmolean Museum, he assigned it to the late Naqada I or early Naqada II Period.⁴³ Given this crown's long association with Lower Egypt, the Upper Egyptian find location of this sherd is striking, and so far, to my knowledge, no one has proposed a satisfactory explanation for its presence in this location. In 1923, G. A. Wainwright explicitly related the Red Crown to Neith "all through the historic period,"⁴⁴ and subsequent discussions have continued this idea, assuming that references to the *ḥwwt Nt*, "Domains of the Red Crown," refer to Neith, presumably at Saïs. However, research and analysis over a quarter century following Wainwright's publication suggest that the title carried by some, *ḥrp ḥwwt Nt*, "Overseer of the Domains of the Red Crown," does not refer either to a place such as Saïs or a function but points rather to a symbolic role indicating royal control over areas in the Nile Delta, perhaps deriving from the Early Dynastic Period before unification had been fully achieved.⁴⁵

Another apparent early link of the Red Crown to Neith in the early times draws on the discovery of an uninscribed head wearing the Red Crown in the Fifth Dynasty sun-temple of Userkaf at Abusir by Herbert Ricke and Siegfried Schott in their 1957 excavation season. Ricke published this discovery in 1958, initially suggesting that the artifact was a king coifed with the Red Crown. However, the lack of a royal beard and the presence of Neith temple personnel, along with the understanding that Userkaf's temple honored Re, whose mother was Neith, led to his final conclusion that the head was really Neith wearing the Red Crown.⁴⁶ The lack of any inscription has proved problematic, however, and in recent years, various scholars have suggested, or even stated, that this head is actually

that of King Userkaf himself, though with virtually no discussion, aside from the note that a faint outline of a moustache may be seen on the upper lip.⁴⁷ There are, however, several reasons which further and perhaps more definitively suggest the head to be that of the king rather than that of Neith. First, while there exist several Old Kingdom statues of the king wearing the Red Crown or the White Crown, no anthropomorphic statues of a deity exist wearing either crown during this time period. Second, when Neith is first depicted in anthropomorphic form in the Second Dynasty, she is coiffed with the double bow,⁴⁸ a headdress found associated with her throughout the Pharaonic Period. Third, the condition of the back of this head suggests that it might have come from a triadic-type sculpture such as is known from the Fourth Dynasty in the Menkaure triads, in which it is Hathor with whom the king is shown, and she appears wearing her characteristic headdress of horns and the sun disk, while the king wore the crown. And finally, the decline in the importance of Neith by the Fifth Dynasty makes it hard to imagine her in such a grouping since, even in the Fourth Dynasty, it is Hathor rather than Neith who dominates in the role of royal goddess. Indeed a direct relation of her with the Red Crown does not appear in iconography until the Middle Kingdom with the black granite pyramidion of Amenemhet III from Dashur which carries a text on its north face that includes Neith's name, as determined by an anthropomorphic depiction of a goddess coiffed with the Red Crown and carrying a was-scepter in her right hand.⁴⁹

Epigraphic evidence also argues against an early identification of Neith with the Red Crown despite the homophony of the names: one of the names of the Red Crown is *nt*, and of course the writing of Neith's name also uses *nt*. In fact, it is the apparent homophonic nature of the

nt-crown and the goddess's name which seems to have led to their identification. *Nt*, however, can mean "water," the Red Crown, and Neith, and therefore simply the presence of *nt* alone need not point definitively to Neith.⁵⁰ Furthermore, several commentators have suggested that Neith's name really is *nrt*, in which case the point of homophony is actually moot.⁵¹

Neith as the people's deity

Although Neith clearly fills an important role for royalty, she also appears to have been a very important deity for people in general, at least those from a socioeconomic stratum such that they left behind documentation of their devotion and/or activities, some of which were expressed with her name. Peter Kaplony's corpus of Early Dynastic inscriptions includes both theophoric names and titles of administrators found on seals, seal impressions, tablets, palettes, small vases, labels, and in tomb writing, as well as other kinds of material on which names of officiants, office holders, ritual actors, and such might appear. The documents in this corpus include the names of at least thirty-five different deities,⁵² among which the theophoric names including Neith vastly outnumber those of any other goddess, an imbalance long noted by Egyptologists as attesting to her importance in this very early time.⁵³ Interestingly, however, despite this preponderance during the earliest times, Neith-related names are rare in the Old Kingdom.⁵⁴

Although the provenance and dating of many of the artifacts bearing these inscriptions, especially cylinder seals or stamp seals, lack precision, the style and titles found on them generally place them in the Protodynastic and Early Dynastic Periods when compared to similar

artifacts from known sources and provenance. Since by definition a theophoric name makes a statement about the deity or deities incorporated in it—classically considered as providing a good future, a blessing, protections, and possible traits—a close look at those names containing Neith will help elucidate not only her nature and characteristics but also why she was important. I have classified such names into a number of different categories: those suggesting cult; those expressing beneficial behavior; those relating her to a geographic location; those reflecting a hunting or warrior spirit; those attesting to a spiritual aspect; those making a statement about Neith herself; and finally those affirming the individual's attitude or action toward her. Except for the one name that includes a geographical location, "the Libyan Neith is her ka," there exist multiples and variations within each category. The most prominent category comprises the names attesting Neith's beneficial attitude toward the individual and includes such names as "Neith is satisfied (with me)," "Beloved of Neith," and "One whom Neith protects." Names such as "Neith is her ka" and "Neith is mistress of my ka" point to the individual's spiritual life in relation to Neith, since a person's "ka" is his or her double or life force. The individual's attitude toward the goddess is expressed in names like "My house is grounded in the ka of Neith," "Neith is my mistress," and "she loves Neith," while a cultic relation or understanding might be seen in names such as "one who has seen the wide hall of Neith," "Neith is the guardian of the sanctuary," "one who is in the following of Neith," and "the Neith-sign stands (firm)," ^h_h-N.t,⁵⁵ presumably referring to the standard that appears at her cult place. Of particular interest is that none of these names, despite their apparent suggestion of a cult place for the goddess, confirms Saïs as her center.

Perhaps the most anomalous of these categories is the one I have designated as a hunting or warrior spirit. This group includes names such as “Great is the anger of Neith,” “Neith is victorious,” and “Neith fights.”⁵⁶ Given the symbols of Neith, that is, the crossed arrows, with or without the so-called shield, and the double bow, the warrior concept should not be surprising. In fact, Egyptologists have commonly called her a war goddess, with some suggesting that she originated among a fighting group, possibly Libya in the Western Desert,⁵⁷ although, as noted previously, no known mythology about her supports this appellation. Thus the names may rather refer to her as hunting deity, likely deriving from a prehistoric hunting culture.⁵⁸

A further and rather enigmatic name appears on an object published by Petrie that has been read questionably as *sd.f Nt*, “Provisions of Neith,” or *msn(.t)-Nt*, “Neith is my harpooner.”⁵⁹ It might rather be read, however, as “weaver of Neith,” a description that fits with her known relationship to weaving and fabric.⁶⁰ The very old form of the sign in question is Alan H. Gardiner’s V32 sign, described by him and most recently by Ilona Regulski as a “wickerwork frail,” that is a wickerwork carrying basket.⁶¹ Such a basket would be used to carry not only the raw supplies for the weaving, but the weaving while in process, if what is being woven is a small item, as well as for the finished product assuming an appropriate size.

The name “beautiful is the bark of Neith,” in Egyptian *nfr-wⁱ³-N.t*, is one of the most interesting of these names, specifically because her crossed arrows and bilobate standards appear in association with boats on several Early Dynastic artifacts, including occurrences on boats as well as on decorated vases from late Naqada II and early Naqada III.⁶² In addition, two ebony labels of King Aha dating to the

early First Dynasty include a pair of boats and the figure of a temple including Neith's bilobate standard (see Figure 1.8).⁶³ Although various readings of these nearly identical labels—both of which have holes in the upper-right corner indicating their use to label jars,⁶⁴ perhaps wine jars, one of which is quite damaged—have been proposed, the one agreed upon aspect of each of them is that the top register shows a journey to Neith's temple at Saïs. This journey was quite likely part of the king's biennial tour of the land, the following of Horus, *šms-Hr*, in which the king and his entourage made themselves personally evident to the people,⁶⁵ or was perhaps part of an accession and/or coronation ritual, since visiting Neith's temple at Saïs consistently formed a part of such celebrations and journeys. It is also possible that the label itself might represent a part of the royal ritual of renewal, the *hb-sd*, an important stop on the deceased's mythical mortuary journey to rebirth. These labels thus appear to have served to identify jars used in one of these celebrations in relation to Saïs and to ritual and cult related to Neith, identifying Saïs as a cult place of hers.

The presence of names from the early period suggesting that Neith received cult implies that titles for priests and priestesses as well, and possibly of overseers, who might supervise such personnel, would be present. And indeed they are, most notably in relation to Old Kingdom individuals.⁶⁶ The most basic title, used by a variety of individuals who were perhaps the lowest on the social and economic scale, was *hm-n-Nt*, "Servant of Neith,"⁶⁷ which could also be a name. The person bearing this title might well be a functionary in a place related to Neith and her cult. A related title, and this one surely refers to a function, is *hm(t)-ntr Nt*, "Priestess of Neith," a basic title borne by a number of women, largely mothers and daughters of high

functionaries of the king. These women would have served in the temple or cult place to carry out ritual activities for Neith, and this title commonly appeared with additional descriptors, for example, *ḥm(t)-ntr Nt mḥtjt ḏnb*, “Priestess of Neith who is north of the wall,” with variants, and *ḥm(t)-ntr Nt m swt.s nbt*, “Priestess of Neith in all her cult places,” again with variants. Each of these strongly suggests service in a specific location. Other names beginning with *ḥm(t)-ntr Nt* have an additional epithet that points to the specific action of Neith as *wpt wḏwt*, “Opener of the Ways,” which was commonly used as the name of an Upper Egyptian canid deity, Wepwawet.



Figure 1.8 Ebony label of Aha. Penn Museum, E 9396. Courtesy of the Penn Museum.

Wepwawet’s name itself is susceptible to a number of interpretations: opener of the ways for military conquest, opening of the mouth of the deceased, opening the way of the deceased to the netherworld, opening the way for the

sun to rise, and even opening the womb for birth.⁶⁸ While the same epithet applied to Neith does not appear to encompass such a wide variety of meanings in these early times, it is quite likely that it foregrounds her royal role, perhaps leading the king and his army, and it would certainly apply to her role of leader for the king's travels on his biennial rounds to locations in Egypt, including a possible role for Wepwawet as well. With her Lower Egyptian connections and Wepwawet's Upper Egyptian links, the pair would have balanced each other out in working with the king in relation to the entire land. Therefore it is not impossible that Neith represented the feminine doublet of this god. On the other hand, Neith's standard often appears to be associated with a royal procession, and in this position, she might have been the opener of the king's ways, a protector perhaps, as he moves in a processional.⁶⁹ The fact that Neith plays a major protective role in relation to royalty suggests that the latter interpretation is to be preferred.

Although the evidence presents women as dominating in the service to Neith, men also served in various roles in Neith's cult, some of whom carry the same titles as the women. For example, in addition to some men known simply as *ḥm-nṯr N.t.*, priest of Neith, a man from the Sixth Dynasty was a "divine inspector of the going out of Neith." Titles attested from the earlier period include an "hourly priest of Neith"; a "*sm*-priest of Neith"; a "servant of Neith"; a *sdꜣwty-bꜣty*, that is, "controller of the wine cellar of Neith"; *smꜣ, ḥm-nṯr N.t., sꜣ wrt*, that is, "*sm*-priest, priest of Neith, great one of the phyles"; as well as the expected *ḥm-nṯr N.t.*, "prophet of Neith." Then too, males occasionally served in administrative roles in relation to the goddess.⁷⁰ Very specifically, Metjen, a Lower Egyptian official during the transition from the Third to the Fourth Dynasty, bore a

series of titles, several of which link him with the Saïte nome, then known as Neith's nome, among which are the following: *ḏ-mr Msḏwt*, "administrator of Neith's nome," and *ḥkꜣ mnt Msḏwt*, "governor of the western nome of Neith,"⁷¹ this latter referring to the fact that the nome is in the western delta. Other titles included "regent of the cultivated lands in the west section of the nome of Neith," "regent of the great house in the west part of the nome of Neith," "he attends to the administration of the west nome of Neith," and "one has established for him twelve *spꜣt-mtn* in the nome of Neith."⁷² And then there is Thenti, whose late Fourth Dynasty tomb inscriptions in the Giza necropolis report that he was the *shd(?) ḥm(w) ntr(?) prt Nt(?)*,⁷³ that is, "divine inspector of Neith's procession," suggesting ceremonies celebrating Neith at this time.⁷⁴

Finally, a number of women held the double title of "Priestess of Neith" and "Priestess of Hathor," each with varying epithets, all dated to the Old Kingdom and mostly from the Fourth and Fifth Dynasties in documents from the necropoli at Giza and Saqqara. Their presence reflected the socioeconomic levels of their bearers, making clear that, at least at this time, they arguably did not serve the goddess in Saïs.⁷⁵

Neith and other deities

Evidence of women who served simultaneously as priestesses of both Neith and Hathor points to the common practice of several deities receiving cult in the same place with occasional sharing of personnel as well. In fact, temples commonly housed cult places for several deities in addition to the temple's main deity, and such is the case for Neith's temple at Saïs. Among the deities eventually worshipped at Saïs besides Neith were Sobek, Nephthys

and Isis, Selket/Serket, and Hathor. For the early period, however, since so far there are no remains to be found of the temple itself from earlier times,⁷⁶ other sources such as personal names, administrative titles, and the Pyramid Texts must provide us with information about the relationships that Neith had with different deities. These mortuary texts include a number of utterances describing or showing Neith as a protective deity in cooperation with Selket/Serket, a scorpion deity who is also notable as a protector deity, the pair often working with the sister deities Isis and Nephthys, as shown here.

My mother, Isis! My nurse Nephthys!
You who suckled me,
She Who Remembers Horus!
Neith, behind me! Selket, before me!

PT 555, §1375c

This rather complex text suggests the coffin depicts Neith at the head and Selket at the foot,⁷⁷ while it also includes the presence of Isis and Nephthys as royal mother and royal nurse. In another text from the pyramids, Neith and Selket pair up to protect the deceased's throne, again working with Isis and Nephthys (PT 362, §606d). The combination of these four deities persists throughout Egyptian history, and they commonly appear at the four corners or on the sides of canopic chests, which contained the jars into which the deceased's internal organs—liver, stomach, intestines, and lungs—were placed during his or her preparation for mummification. This traditional role is perhaps best known through the many illustrations of Eighteenth Dynasty Tutankhamen's funerary treasures.⁷⁸

Several other texts from the pyramids include Neith and Selket, again paired, and now identified with body parts of the deceased, presumably in a protective mode or helping the deceased to be successful in achieving the desired

afterlife intact. Thus the two goddesses are identified with the deceased's back in one text (PT 580, 1547c) and with his or her thighs in a second (PT 539, §1314a). Each of these references occurs in a laundry list of deities assisting the deceased.

Two other deities appear paired with Neith in the pyramids: Seth,⁷⁹ paired with Neith in one specific reference (PT 577, §1521b); and Sobek, paired with Neith in two references, both of which attest to her as his mother (PT 308, §489c; PT 317, §510a). The Pyramid Text involving Seth paired with Neith appears in a listing of the member pairs of the Ennead as content with each other. In Seth's case, the text reads, "content are Seth and Neith" (PT 577, §1521b). This is quite an enigmatic pairing, given the usual pairing is Seth and Nephthys, since typically Nephthys is the sister mate of Seth in the Heliopolitan theogony. Ramadan el-Sayed has suggested that the unusual pairing reflects their respective bellicose sides, their warrior aspects.⁸⁰ Alternatively, it might suggest Upper and Lower Egypt, or it may simply be a scribal error. We cannot truly know. Although this combination of Seth and Neith appears anomalous, early evidence of his significance in Upper Egypt might suggest otherwise. In fact, Jochem Kahl has argued quite convincingly that the earliest written evidence of Seth comes from tomb U-j at Um el-Qaab at Abydos, the inscription dating to around 3320 BCE, in a text reading *pr.w-wr Sth*, alternatively *Sth pr.w-wr*, meaning "the Upper Egyptian booth of Seth" or "Seth's Upper Egyptian booth." The booth in question is the Upper Egyptian festival booth that forms part of the royal ritual of renewal, the *ḥb-sd*, of the king, while the Lower Egyptian, *pr.w nw*, is the corresponding structure for the north. Much is yet to be learned about this festival, which may occur a number of times in a king's lifetime, and even less is known about

rituals related to the king's accession and coronation; such festivals involved asserting and affirming both Upper and Lower Egypt as a unity and celebrating the king's actions as such. Thus Seth's relationship to the Upper Egyptian booth in this very early text proves most challenging and interesting, particularly since both he and Horus make up the dual kingship of Egypt, and Horus has an ancient home at Hierakonpolis, south of Naqada, as well as having a presence in various forms in many areas throughout Egypt. He might also be aligned with Lower Egypt, as many standards topped by falcons show.

As noted, both the texts relating Neith with Sobek speak of her as his mother. The first of these reads as follows: "I have looked at you as Sobek looked at Neith" (PT 308, §489c). This text, in which a preceding section reads, "I have looked on you as Horus looked on Isis" (PT 308, §489a), speaks indubitably to a pairing of Sobek and Neith as that of son and mother. Also expressing the mother-son relationship is the text that states explicitly:

I have come today from out of the waters of the flood;
I am Sobek, green of plume, watchful of face, raised of brow,
the raging one who came forth from the shank and tail of the great
goddess who is in sunshine.
I have come to my waterways which are in the bank of the flood of
Mehet-Weret...
I appear as Sobek, son of Neith...

PT 317, §§507a-510a

The full text clearly identifies Sobek, a crocodile god connected especially with Shedit, that is, ancient Crocodilopolis, today's Medinet el-Faiyum, in the Faiyum west of the Nile; and he also had cult centers in Ombos, today's Kom Ombo, in the first nome of Upper Egypt, south of Esna, as well as in several other Upper Egyptian locales. As a crocodile deity, he is identified with the king as he is

reborn from Weret. The crocodile-king comes into flooded waterways, the Mehet-Weret, bringing renewal. Sobek's sonship emphasizes the watery nature of Neith, a trait pointing to her identification with the Great Flood, *mḥt wrt*. This text also reinforces Neith's relation to royalty with the explicit designation of the goddess as mother of the crocodile-king.

Like Neith, Sobek is known from Early Dynastic seals, one of which depicts a number of crocodiles as well as a temple surmounted by a bovine head, identified by Jean Yoyotte as that of Crocodilopolis.⁸¹ This head probably represents *Mḥt-wrt*, the Great Flood, shown as a cow goddess and long associated with Neith.⁸² The mother-son relationship also fits into the understanding that an individual prospers because of Neith, the name *Hmt-N.t*, possibly "Neith is my nurse,"⁸³ a name which brings to mind the depictions of Neith nursing two crocodiles as well as the section of a hymn at Esna stating that she "suckled the two crocodiles," though both come from much later materials.⁸⁴ Both these examples merit further discussion, notably addressing Mehet-Weret, the Great Flood, as a possible avatar of Neith or vice versa. Her relation to Sobek brings into focus her relation to waters, marshes, and particularly the Great Flood/primordial waters, pointing to a close relation, if not identification, of Neith with Mehet-Weret, the Great Flood, a relationship made quite explicit at Esna.⁸⁵ Together, both Pyramid Texts serve to affirm and elaborate the protective and beneficial nature of Neith's activity. Since these texts serve to the benefit of royalty, her presence in them helps to underscore her connection with the king and as kingmaker. These texts also show that Mehet-Weret, often clearly designated as a divinity by the divine determinative, has no single location but might be conceived as the flood waters, the primordial waters, or

the waters of the celestial vault.

Interestingly, Neith's earliest association with another deity occurs paired with Anubis in three documented theophoric names prior to the Fourth Dynasty.⁸⁶ Anubis is an extremely ancient royal deity,⁸⁷ who in time is charged with the role of overseeing the funerary activities involved in mummification. In two of his names in relation to Neith, he appears to act as a companion or even a sibling of Neith, perhaps male to female, or Upper Egypt's seventeenth nome associated with Anubis as contrasted to Neith's Lower Egyptian nome, the fourth-fifth. The names read as follows: *Hmsj-ṯnpw-Nt*, "Anubis and Neith sit down together," and *Sn-ṯnpw-Nt*, "Anubis and Neith are siblings" or, as Terence DuQuesne suggests, "Companion of Anubis and Neith," while he reads the second name, *Hmsj-ṯnpw-Nt*, as perhaps "Dweller with Anubis and Neith." Though both names date to the Protodynastic/Early Dynastic Periods, their provenance is unknown aside from the mortuary context.⁸⁸ The third inscription, *Twr-ṯrtj-ṯnpw-Nt*, from a funerary stela found at Helwan and dated to the First or Second Dynasty by DuQuesne, reads possibly "the eyes of Anubis and Neith cleanse,"⁸⁹ though it might also be read as "the eyes of Anubis and Neith ward off (protect?)." ⁹⁰ This latter reading might be understood as referring to a protective role such as appears later in the Pyramid Texts. Kaplony speculates that the relationship between Anubis and Neith may have to do with Lower Egypt, though he is very uncertain.⁹¹ Although some might argue that the early relationship of each with royalty from their respective areas of Egypt makes sense, I would rather emphasize that this early and significant relationship of each with and for royalty dominates, particularly since any specifically Lower Egyptian relationship remains otherwise undocumented. It would be interesting to know more

about the individuals who carried them.

At least two names pair Neith with the ancient handicraft deities, respectively Khnum and Ptah: *Hm-Hnm-Nt*, “servant of Khnum and Neith,”⁹² and *Mrj(t)-Nt-Pth*, “beloved of Neith and Ptah.”⁹³ Ptah is a Lower Egyptian god of craftsmen and has an association with royal workshops, while Khnum is a potter god associated with Esna in Upper Egypt and known for creating the royal, *kꜥ* or double, on the potter’s wheel.⁹⁴ Both these early handicraft gods later assume creator roles, and as Jan Assmann has noted in his discussion of creator deities, their later appearance probably derives from their basic activity of making, Egyptian *jrj*.⁹⁵ Since Neith herself has an ancient association with spinning or weaving/plaiting (*msn*), most notably through her town of Saïs’s association with the linen used in mummification,⁹⁶ and with creative activities that can also be related to *jrj*,⁹⁷ the pairing of her with each of these similar handicraft deities may well also lead to her later definitive appearance as a creator deity.

Neith as creator and maintainer of the cosmos

Not surprisingly, although Neith’s relationships with handicraft deities Khnum and Ptah, as well as her own handicraft work, do not explicitly suggest her as a cosmic creator and maintainer, as already noted above, there are some early names that do suggest that possibility. Indeed none of the early texts shows explicit creator references for Neith or, for that matter, any other deity, but some of them incorporate ideas that appear later in the creation texts from Esna. Knowledge of the general concepts related to creation in early Egypt might help us understand the possibilities of these early expressions—that become much clearer throughout Egyptian history—and are related very

clearly to Neith in her role as creator deity in the Esna texts dating to the Graeco-Roman Period. Such expressions include the emergence of a primeval hill from the waters of the flood, on which is the primordial creator god, Atum, who then of himself conceives and bears the second generation: Shu, air and light, and his spouse Tefnut, water, who in turn bear Geb, the earth god, and Nut, the sky goddess, themselves the parents of the active gods Osiris, Isis, Seth, and Nephthys. Osiris and Isis are the parents of Horus, though one genealogy for Horus has him as the second born of Geb and Nut.⁹⁸ For example, one name may be read as *wsh-dw-N.t*, “spacious is the hill of Neith,”⁹⁹ perhaps a reference to the primordial hill which she brings forth in the ritual text at Esna.¹⁰⁰ A similar interpretation might be given the name found on a small stele from Abydos, *Htp-dw-N.t*, “gracious is Neith of the hill.”¹⁰¹ In yet a third name, *prj-n-N.t*, “Neith comes/goes forth,”¹⁰² one might see the goddess’s emergence at the beginning, the one “who began to be at the beginning ... and appeared of herself,”¹⁰³ a text which recalls the time before the beginning, as expressed in “before the sky came into being, before the earth came into being, before people came into being, before the gods came into being, before death came into being” (PT 571, §1466a-d). And Serge Sauneron has suggested that the early name mentioned above, *Hm-Hnm-Nt*, “servant of Khnum and Neith,”¹⁰⁴ may point to a very early manifestation of what he sees as the male and female aspects of the creator.¹⁰⁵

Neith certainly acted as maintainer of the earthly realm, as evinced in the letter the Ennead sent to her as “Neith the Great, the Divine Mother” in the Twentieth Dynasty narrative “Contendings of Horus and Seth,”¹⁰⁶ noted previously. It also contains a request for her opinion on who should be on the throne, Horus or Seth. When she

replies that they should place Horus on the throne, she threatens that unless such is done, “I will get angry and the sky will meet the ground.” This response leaves no question that the goddess has the power and the control to produce the cataclysm that would end the world, and thus she appears as a cosmic deity of the first order. The same idea might be read in the early seal bearing a theophoric name, possibly reading *aA dnd (?) N.t*), “Great is the anger of Neith”.¹⁰⁷ And from slightly earlier than “Contendings” come references to Neith as creator on the late Nineteenth Dynasty sarcophagus of Merenptah.¹⁰⁸

With this background, the much later texts from Esna certainly appear to reflect these earlier concepts and might suggest that indeed Neith played a role as cosmic creator and maintainer long before the Graeco-Roman Period,¹⁰⁹ although it is from this later time that the most detailed materials describing Neith’s creative activity derive. Specifically, the hymns to Neith at Esna related to ritual activities and specific days of celebration provide ample evidence of her activity as a creator deity, indeed creator deity of the cosmos. For example, the ritual of the thirteenth of Epiph—that is, the third month of summer, the eleventh month of the Egyptian year, between the middle of May and middle of June in today’s Western calendar—reveals a creation narrative in which Neith brings into being the cosmic and divine worlds. The ritual begins with a description of the goddess that recalls other ancient Egyptian creation materials, parts of which remind the comparative religionist of creation narratives of other ancient Near Eastern cultures, most notably the Babylonian.¹¹⁰ The Esna hymn begins as follows:

The Father of Fathers,
Mother of Mothers,
the divine being,

who began to be at the beginning,
was found in the heart of the primordial waters,
appeared of herself,

while the land was (still) in darkness,
when land had not (yet) appeared,
when plant had not (yet) pushed up...

§201,1111

Following this description of what one might call the initial, or alpha, state, Neith metamorphoses first into a cow and then into the *lates* fish, a kind of perch, following which she creates light with her eyes and brings into being the primordial hill. Subsequently she creates a collegium of thirty deities, installing them on the hillock, creating the sun, the Ogdoad, and the gods Apophis and Thoth. At the end of this ritual utterance, Neith's activities are defined as the seven words, Egyptian *tsw*, of Mehet-Weret, the Great Flood, and Neith journeys to Saïs, where she settles down.¹¹²

The second major text from Esna relating to Neith and her creative activity appears in the context of the feast of the raising of the sky and the installation of the potter's wheel of Khnum, the other major resident deity at Esna. This festival occurs on the first of Phamenoth, the third month of winter, the seventh of the Egyptian year, mid-January to mid-February in the modern Western calendar. The morning hymns include a long one to Khnum, addressing his activities as creator of human beings, a short hymn to Menhyt, the lion-headed goddess associated with the area and with whom Neith is associated, and finally a hymn to Neith. In this hymn, Neith appears as the "one who is," that is to say, each section begins with the incipit "you are ..." The piece therefore describes her, rather than reporting her activity, as does the ritual text. The descriptions are illustrative, however, of Neith as both

creator and maintainer:

To adore Neith, say:

You are the mistress of Saïs, that is to say Tanen,¹¹³
of whom two parts are masculine and one part feminine;
original goddess, mysterious and great,
who began to be at the beginning
and inaugurated everything(?)

§252,25]¹¹⁴...

...

(the one) who makes gush forth the inundation in its time,
and also gives a new youth with the water-of-renewal in its season;
(the one) who makes sprout the vegetation
and creates the tree of life for the living...

§252,27¹¹⁵

Most notably, Neith is the celestial vault, the expanse of water from which comes Tatanen, the emergent primeval mound, and Nun, the primordial waters. She is also the mistress of the sky, mistress of the palace on whom depends the king's enthronement, and the mistress of the valiant in battle and things of the desert, including quarrymen. Curiously this hymn describes her as two-thirds male and one-third female, a configuration that equals the constellation of Nut, Geb, and Shu of the Heliopolitan Ennead: sky and earth, and the air/light which separates them.¹¹⁶ In this description, the goddess encompasses—that is, she equals—the cosmos. Clearly then, Neith appears as a primordial creator late in Egyptian history, so there is good reason to suggest she appeared with creator powers in very early Egyptian history.

Neith and the mortuary world

As already noted, Neith's role in the mortuary world and its activities is quite limited during the period up through the end of the Old Kingdom. Because her appearances in

the Pyramid Texts include only seven distinct utterances, it is clear she was not understood as a mortuary deity in the Old Kingdom, save to a very limited extent; rather she functioned primarily in the earthly world of royalty. In fact, as we have seen, most of the Pyramid Texts referring to Neith appear in conjunction with other gods: her son Sobek, Selket/Serket, her partner in protecting the deceased, and then with Isis and Nephthys along with Selket/Serket as the four together protected the deceased. In addition, as noted, she also appeared in what might be called “laundry lists” that detail which gods and goddesses are identified with different body parts of the deceased, presumably again with the aim of assisting him or her to remain intact in body into the next world. There is, however, one area not addressed: Neith’s apparent appearance, or an aspect of her, through the bilobate sign. The relevant text, which some scholars link with Neith, occurs in the so-called Cannibal Hymn from the Pyramid Texts (PT 273–274), which appears in both Unis’s and Teti’s pyramids, the two earliest pyramids with texts.¹¹⁷ The utterance refers to the *ḥmwst* (PT 273, §396a), the determinative for which uses Neith’s bilobate sign with crossed arrows, the whole perhaps meaning the “powers of the king.”¹¹⁸ As the sole example from this period, it is difficult to define the precise meaning of these powers, although the context suggests that they comprised an enabling and/or protective nature and they stand in some relation to the *k̓s* or souls. Indeed Christopher Eyre, in his book-length study of this interesting spell,¹¹⁹ notes that in this section “a description is given of the king with his symbols and manifestations of power with the text: ‘The *kas* of Unas are behind him; his *hemsut* are under his feet.’”¹²⁰ It is conceivable that the *ḥmwst* powers form a feminine counterpart to the *k̓s*. It is important to note,

however, that though the signs relate to Neith, the goddess does not appear by name in this particular text.

Ultimately we know little about Neith's origins save the suspicion they lie in hunting, given the early use of arrows and the bow as symbols. Her importance for royalty, however, remains without question. Not only do two First Dynasty queens, each of whom appears to have served as regent for an underage heir, have their names in serekhs and own tombs on a par with those of First Dynasty kings, but Neith's home in Saïs functioned as an important stop for kings, whether on celebratory trips during their lifetimes or as part of the royal funerary ritual, possibly both. During this early period, Neith functioned very much as a goddess in the world of the living, evinced both by the many Neith-related theophoric names and the numerous functionaries who served her. In addition, she appears to have had a role in the creation of the cosmos, a function without doubt in the Ptolemaic Period, as evident in text from the temple at Esna, but possibly seen in some of the early theophoric names. There is no question that in the late New Kingdom she was perceived as the maintainer of the universe. In sum, Neith proves to be a very interesting and complex deity about whom some is known but much is not.

Addendum:

In the spring of 2019, too late to be considered for this book, the work of M. Victoria Almansa-Villatoro on the signs and symbols related to early Neith came to my attention. In the following articles, "Renaming the Queens: A New Reading for the Crossed Arrows Sign and a Religious Approach to the Early Dynastic Onomastics" and "The Gender Ambiguity of Fertilizations: the Hemusets as a Case

Study,” forthcoming in 2019 in SAK 48 and ZÄS 146 respectively, Almansa-Villatoro challenges the customary and widely accepted readings and understandings of these signs and thus the early presence of Neith.

Hathor

Aside from Isis, Hathor is probably the best-known goddess from ancient Egypt, a deity who appears relatively early and never disappears from Egyptian history. Her characteristic headdress, a pair of cow's horns¹ with a sun disk between them, makes her quite distinguishable from other deities during the third and the first half of the second millennia BCE. Her hairstyle—coming down on either side of her face to her upper body, sometimes with a final curl, often called the Hathor Headdress—similarly distinguishes her from other goddesses, partly due to the unusual frontal nature of depictions and partly due to the hairstyle itself. This latter coiffure also appearing on artifacts that have been found in neighboring areas such as Syria and Sumer and may be seen in various of the ivories commonly referred to as the “Woman in the Window” (see Figure 2.1).²

Significantly, it is very clear from her early appearances that Hathor had a very close relationship with the king, a relationship that has long been considered to go back into prehistory,³ an idea derived from the presence of the unnamed bovine heads that appear on the Narmer Palette, a slate palette related to very early kingship (see Figure 2.2).⁴ The importance of this palette—representing the earliest stages of Egypt's historical period, or possibly the very late Predynastic Period—has long contributed to the general knowledge of Hathor's existence as a significant deity, very closely related to royalty. However, little is

known with any certainty about her possible beginnings and origins. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to explore what can be known and suggest possible answers to some questions, such as the meaning of her name, her origins, her appearance, her role vis-à-vis royalty, including both the king and the queen, her presence in ritual and the Pyramid Texts, her cult places, and her notable designation as a goddess of foreign lands, most notably the northern Levantine city of Byblos.



Figure 2.1 Figure of a woman in a window, ivory relief from Arslan Tash, Syria. Sumerian civilization, 2900–2350 BCE. De Agostini Picture Library/Getty Image 148355803.



Figure 2.2 Narmer Palette found at Hierakonpolis dating to the Naqada III period, the beginning of the First Dynasty: recto and verso. Wikimedia Commons.

To begin, the meaning of Hathor's name is not wholly clear aside from the actual words in it: *ḥw.t-Ḥr*. The *ḥw.t* signifies "house" or "temple" and the *Ḥr* designates the royal falcon Horus, that symbol relating to the very earliest kingship,⁵ with the whole reading "House of Horus." While it might seem that the meaning of those words is clear, in fact it is not, both because the Egyptian word for "house" carries a number of quite complex meanings,⁶ and because Horus, one of the most ancient gods in ancient Egypt, has at least two major forms and numerous regionally related forms and names/epithets. That he was a falcon-god appears beyond argument, but in one genealogy he comes second in the list of five original gods (Osiris, Horus, Seth, Isis, and Nephthys), while in another one that is generally better known, he is not even included in this generation. Rather, he is the son of Osiris and Isis and appears in a well-known myth in which he is procreated posthumously by

his mother Isis when she revives Osiris, her husband-brother, long enough to become impregnated.⁷

Looking at Hathor's name in a bit more detail, Plutarch, the second-century CE Greek commentator who presents the only ancient narrative myth on these Egyptian gods in his *De Iside et Osiride*,⁸ points specifically to Hathor as the "cosmic House of Horus," combined as its own hieroglyph, a standing falcon within a house.⁹ Essentially each of these hieroglyphs, that is, the standing falcon and the house, works alone, but combined as *hw.t-Hr*, they carry several possible meanings:¹⁰ one, the heaven in which the falcon-god Horus flies, from which Hathor gained the title "Mistress of Heaven";¹¹ two, the House of the Horus King who was the Distant One, that is, the falcon; three, the womb from which the god Horus the Elder emerged, making Hathor his mother;¹² four, at least from the Middle Kingdom on, "Mistress of the Stars";¹³ and finally five, the house of the chief or headman known as the House of Horus.¹⁴

Although each of the first four of these ideas is fairly clear—at least with the understanding that the king was considered an avatar of the divine Horus falcon—the last of these suggestions raises several questions. Assuming such a place as the House of Horus existed, that is, the house or palace of the headman, the first question asks where it existed, followed by questioning when it existed, and then what its purpose was, with the last questions asking how, why, when, and where its identification morphed into the goddess Hathor, if indeed that is what occurred. Thus if there existed a separate building called the House of Horus located in a specific place to be used for a specific purpose, what relation might it have had to a deity carrying the same name?

In fact, it is important to consider the relation of

questions about Hathor to the so-called Narmer Palette discovered by James E. Quibell under a temple in Hierakonpolis during his 1897–8 season, a discovery leading to much commentary on the palette's purpose, what it signifies, and more. In his initial publication, Quibell provided only a simple description,¹⁵ interestingly omitting any reference to the pairs of bovine heads surmounting each side, as well as the same figures on the belt of the king's kilt on its recto. George Francis Legge rectified this omission with his 1900 discussion of various known slate artifacts, among them this palette. There he specifically identified the pairs of bovine heads surmounting the palette on both sides as Hathor,¹⁶ as well as noting the same heads, four of them, on the king's belt on the reverse of the palette.¹⁷

This early identification led to artifacts with similar figures with a bovine head, human facial features, and incurved horns, sometimes with five stars, being designated as Hathor. For example, in the 1950s, E. Martin Burgess and Anthony Arkell, in reporting on the reconstruction of a porphyry bowl from Hierakonpolis, identified the bovine head with stars found on the rim as Hathor (see Figure 2.3). Notably, however, this reconstruction also presented the hieroglyph of a *b3*-bird on the rim,¹⁸ perhaps related to the bovine figure, though the hieroglyph itself had nothing to do with the goddess; rather, Burgess and Arkell suggested that this bird, a black-and-white stork, suggested Hathor and her relation to the night sky.¹⁹ They did not even raise the question of whether the bovine figure might be someone other than Hathor. Indeed, commentators simply used the Narmer Palette with its four depictions of bovine heads with incurved horns as evidence of the presence of Hathor in the earliest periods.²⁰

In 1962, however, Henry G. Fischer called these arguments into serious question in his publication of UC Stela 14312, suggesting that the *bꜥ*-bird forms a group with the head on the Hierakonpolis bowl. On the UC stela, *Hsw*, the stela's owner, mentions his beloved wife, *nfr-bꜥ.t*, that is, overseer of the harem (*hnr*) of *Bꜥ.t*. In the same article, Fischer notes another of Bat's officials found on Berlin Stela 7765, owned by *Dꜥ.tꜥ* who was the *hry-tp n Bꜥ.t*, "Overlord of the Bat-nome," which definitely refers to the governorship of the seventh Upper Egyptian nome of Hu.²¹ In his discussion, Fischer addresses the relation of Bat and Hathor:



Figure 2.3 Top rim of the reconstructed Porphyry Bowl from Hierakonpolis with Bat head and possible Ba bird. Bowl in Petrie Museum, UC.16245 with replicas of fragments AN1896-1908.E.132 and AN1896-1908.E.3645 from the

[T]here is ... no contemporary mention of her [Hathor] before the Fourth Dynasty, and we do not know when and from what quarter she obtained her bovine form ... If Hathor had borrowed the horns of Bat in or before the First Dynasty, we should then expect them to show the more archaic form that is typical of the latter, which are heavy and ribbed, and with the tips turned inward. And if, on the other hand, Bat had been influenced by Hathor, we might expect her horns to have evolved into something like the elegant outward-curving pair that Hathor wears. Instead, they [Bat's horns] lose their bovine form entirely and become a stylized pair of long ropelike antennae terminating in graceful spirals. By the Fourth Dynasty, when the horns and sun disk of Hathor are first attested, this evolution had progressed so far that the horns of Bat were scarcely recognizable as such, and their original form became, as a rule, still less recognizable during the succeeding dynasties.²²

Fischer further notes that “it is unlikely that this emblem [the goddess Bat] was identified with Hathor much earlier than the Middle Kingdom.”²³ In fact, in one regular appearance of the Bat emblem, we see it as part of a sistrum, a percussive musical instrument that was related to but distinct from Hathor and used in worship, an example of which appears clearly in the Eleventh Dynasty chapel of Nebhepetre Mentuhotep at Dendera, in which Hathor appears holding such a Bat-headed sistrum while addressing the king and holding his right hand with her left hand (see Figure 2.4).²⁴

Although Fischer notes the Fourth Dynasty as Hathor's earliest appearance, though he does not indicate when in the over 125-year history of that dynasty, recent research suggests a possible earlier mention of Hathor—though it is possible to argue about the hieroglyphic meaning—that appears in the Saqqara tomb of Khabausoker, which can be dated tentatively to Snefru at the beginning of the Fourth Dynasty or maybe Huni at the end of Dynasty Three.²⁵ In

this tomb, Khabausoker's wife is named as Nefer-hetep-Hathor, carved twice in very clear hieroglyphs that might be read, as Hermann Ranke does, as "beautiful is the favor/mercy of Hathor."²⁶ Important to note, however, is that by this time, likely during the twenty-sixth century BCE,²⁷ the beautiful example of Hathor's name, presented as the wife's "great name," that is, her major name,²⁸ suggests considerable prehistory. Logic suggests that not only the name but the clean presentation of it would not have been possible without some, if not considerable, prehistory, and it is getting at that prehistory that is the challenge. It is possible, however, that this name referred to a place rather than the goddess, that is, to the House of Horus. Might it mean only "beautiful and merciful is the House of Horus," referring to the location?



Figure 2.4 Mentuhotep Chapel in Dendera, left wall, with Hathor holding a Bat Sistrum to the nose of the king. © DAI Cairo.

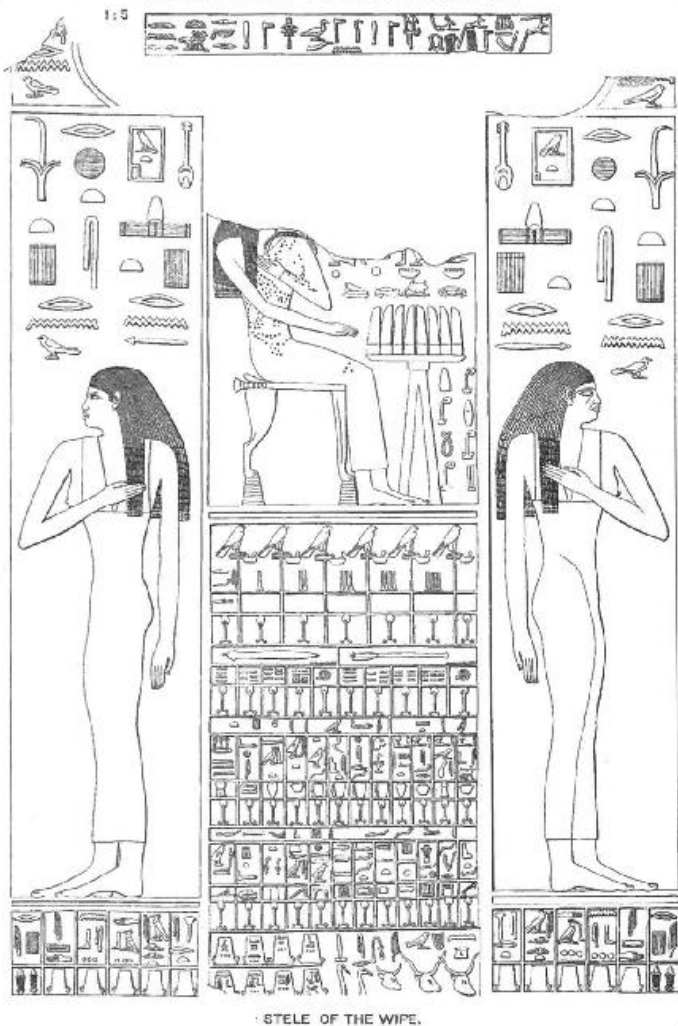


Figure 2.5 Nefer-hetep-Hathor, wife of Seker-kha-bau, Third-Fourth Dynasty. Figure courtesy of Etana eBook. Margaret A. Murray.

Significantly, however, as Robyn Gillam notes, “Our first unequivocal textual evidence to Hathor is found on the façade of the valley temple of Khafre,”²⁹ who was the fourth king of the Fourth Dynasty and the builder/owner of the second largest pyramid at Giza. First published by Uvo Hölscher in 1912, Hathor appears in an inscription on the south side of the entrance of Khafre’s valley temple, while

an inscription for the goddess Bastet appears on the north side of the entrance.³⁰ Because of the presence of Bastet in the parallel position on the north side, there is no reason to believe the hieroglyph reads House of Horus rather than Hathor. Notable also, as with the less secure date of Hathor for Nefer-hetep-Hathor, the clear form and carving of this hieroglyph suggests considerable prehistory for the hieroglyph, again raising the question of what that might be as noted previously. Ultimately then, while the Hathor glyph may indeed be present, possibly as early as the late Third Dynasty, it may signify the House of Horus rather than the deity. She was clearly present as a deity in significant form by the early to mid-Fourth Dynasty, however, and thus we would surmise there is a backstory of some kind here.

Such a backstory might lie behind Wolfgang Helck's 1954 suggestion that *ḥw.t-Ḥr* actually points to the house of the chief or headman, rather than the goddess,³¹ and that same backstory, perhaps more importantly, might lie behind Rudolf Anthes' idea that the literal hieroglyph of a rectangular enclosure with a falcon inside suggests a space and location where the early Horus King was acclaimed as such. Specifically, Anthes considered the location to be in Heliopolis, stating that in this location "the house of Horus was an actual house or hall of the actual Horus,"³² a building in which the collection of officials referred to as the corporation, Egyptian *i drwt*,³³ convened, as it was the body that actually acclaimed the king as the right one.³⁴ In fact, Anthes stated, "The great corporation born in primeval age in Heliopolis' is an actual institution of ancient origin, though it is considered as identical with the corporation of Heliopolis which exists in the world of the myths and the gods."³⁵ In his opinion, this institution "originated in the primeval time" but it also "was

reiterated in the mythical world.”³⁶ He also opines that “‘the house of Horus’ appears to have been an exceptional and holy name of the house of the *śr*-officials ... the *ḥt śrw*, ‘the house of the *śr*-officials.’ ”³⁷ Finally, Anthes concludes that “[t]he house of Horus, *ḥt Hr*, however was early deified as ‘Hathor,’ ”³⁸ though he never suggests when, how, or why.

Taken together, these scholars suggest that the earliest kings, Horus kings, were acclaimed as leaders in a location, stated to be ancient Heliopolis, that was called the House of Horus, deriving the idea from specific Pyramid Texts, that had the quality of a court that was empowered to give an acclamation to him who had proved himself right.³⁹ In fact, the acclaiming body was probably a group of leaders or advisors who, arrayed around “the one,” stressed his prominence to the other members, who then voted “the one” as king.⁴⁰ This text, said to be reporting the words of the divine Ennead, the corporate body of deities, reads:

You are Horus, Osiris’s son;
You, Unis, are the senior god, Hathor’s son;
You are Geb’s seed.

PT 303, §466a41

The king is thus acclaimed as the legitimate successor, appropriate to fill the role of leader.⁴² In fact, another text supports the idea that the king is truly acceptable with the assertion that:

There is no accusation of one alive against me;
There is no accusation of one dead against me,
There is no accusation of a duck against me,
There is no accusation of long-horned bull against me.

PT 270, §386a-b43

With this statement, the king declares himself “clean,” so to speak,⁴⁴ though the context obviously refers not only to

the acclamation of the king as appropriate to rule but also to his ability to journey to and be accepted in the next world—especially considering the text’s location in the antechambers of the pyramids, that is, the area for departure from the tomb—as he continues on his journey to the sky.⁴⁵ This conclusion emphasizes the idea that mythic activities in the sky derive from similar earthly activities,⁴⁶ and thus the king’s affirmation of his “cleanness” in the gods’ celestial court reflected the same affirmation as it did in the earthly court of Heliopolis, for “[p]resumably the court of Heliopolis alone was empowered to affirm the rightness (*Mꜣt*) of an individual by acclaim (*hrw*).”⁴⁷ Thus it is clear that the House of Horus, which Anthes locates explicitly in Heliopolis,⁴⁸ provided the locale for the affirmation of the king as the Horus King, a physical location related to the foundations of kingship. While the location itself, Heliopolis, may be disputed, that such a location actually existed is hardly in question. Modern logic would also suggest at the very minimum a building or something like it in which the leaders would meet to accept, if not acclaim, and/or perhaps even install the king as king, which might be called the House of Horus, an idea which returns this discussion again to Helck’s note on the topic.⁴⁹

These kinds of assertions and proclamations point to ritual activities and behaviors occurring in the type of place that Helck proposes; it is such ritual practices that might have occurred in the center concerned here and, in time, were seen as deriving from divine actions. Thus as both Anthes and Vincent Tobin have suggested,⁵⁰ the divine world gained its population and activities from the earthly world,⁵¹ a concept Anthes made explicit when he wrote that “In the first third of the third millennium, however, Horus being the king of Egypt was a most actual

living entity and, consequently, the House of Horus was an actual house or hall of the actual Horus.”⁵²

Interestingly, most of the commentators noted so far suggest Heliopolis as the location of whatever acclamation or judgment occurred,⁵³ an activity that was reflected in the world of the gods as seen in the Pyramid Texts of the later Fifth Dynasty, but one which, in fact, we know almost nothing about, even from much later periods and certainly from earlier times. However, it is important to note that the work of these scholars preceded the truly significant work that has been done in both Lower Egypt, that is, the northern area, and Upper Egypt, that is, the southern part of the country, during the last decades of the twentieth century and the early years of the twenty-first century. The discoveries in the Upper Egyptian town of Hierakonpolis, known in Egyptian as Nekhen, since the very late 1960s/early 1970s, already known from those of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—initially under the direction of Walter Fairervis and a team that included Michael Hoffman as a trained field archaeologist, albeit in New World archaeology,⁵⁴ and later in 1980s under Hoffman’s own direction—have been remarkable in learning much about this town’s late Predynastic and Early Dynastic Periods. Since Hoffman’s untimely death in 1990, the work there has been continued under a team led by Renée F. Friedman, with remarkable discoveries in general but for this discussion, notably on location HK29A, a clear ceremonial center. Although only lightly suggested by her team, the richness of the discoveries over the years in this area, beginning with the discovery of Tomb 100 there in the 1890s by James E. Quibell and Fredrick W. Green,⁵⁵ suggests that in very early times, Naqada I-II, Hierakonpolis was a very active community, with tombs attesting to social stratification, such as Tomb 100, and

significant related artifacts, quite notably falcon and falcon-related objects that point to early kingship and the dominance of Horus as the related deity.⁵⁶

This area appears to have served as a location where its leader, who developed during the gradual social stratification that occurred during this period, was acclaimed or confirmed.⁵⁷ In contrast, the Lower Egyptian area of Heliopolis was likely no more than a small village in this very early period, with cemeteries that so far show little of the social stratification⁵⁸ of the kind that would be evident had Heliopolis had a major role in Predynastic and Early Dynastic kingship. Indeed, the publications and discussions of R. F. Friedman and her team members over recent years provide much evidence for cultic and ceremonial activity related to HK29A, with its residues of cultic activities, apparently special to this locale, such as bones of prestigious food animals and ceramic sherds of ritual containers, suggesting elite patronage and use by elite clientele, among other items, beginning likely in the third quarter of the fourth millennium BCE and continuing into the First Dynasty, early in the first quarter of the third millennium BCE. Their work on HK29A and related structures provides glimpses of ritual practices and clues to understanding the formation of the state in Hierakonpolis and in possibly other localities as well,⁵⁹ suggesting the town's importance in possible acclamation and/or accession of the king. Thus, while there may be some other polities that have such ceremonial centers, for example in various other Upper Egyptian locations as well as locations in Lower Egypt which have evidence of early centers with considerable activity,⁶⁰ the very clear evidence showing the Hierakonpolis connections to falcons⁶¹ supports its long-time association with Horus of Nekhen, which suggests the real possibility that it was here that the early kings were

initially acclaimed or confirmed.

Patricia Perry has published a very incisive and interesting article discussing the sources of power in Hierakonpolis as legacies for Egyptian kingship.⁶² In this article, she outlines her understanding of the importance of both political and ideological power, including the use of ritual practices intended to benefit the whole community as well as to demonstrate the effectiveness of the leaders' power, noting the importance of the HK29A ceremonial center in which these ritual activities took place.⁶³ Thus the nomination, acclamation, coronation, and/or rejuvenation of the leader in Hierakonpolis occurring in this center, supported by the leaders of the people, and being called the House of Horus, seems possible. In this sense, the House of Horus could eventually become deified as Hathor, as Anthes specifically stated,⁶⁴ albeit related to Heliopolis.

Nevertheless this speculative idea does not need to have evolved into a deity, particularly an active deity who eventually wielded considerable political clout, as did Hathor, unless, as Gillam has suggested, such a place served as the source of "the creation ... of the speculation of the elite aimed at providing an ideology that was both political and religious for the institution of the kingship and the authoritarian theocracy that it represented."⁶⁵ While I do not support Heliopolis as the original location of such an institution that might morph into the deity, I do support the general ideological concept, particularly in light of the definite prominence Hathor had attained at least by the time of Menkaure, the penultimate king of the Fourth Dynasty. Although it is possible that Hathor was considered a deity by the late Third or early Fourth Dynasty—with incorporation of *ḥw.t-Ḥr*, which appears in the name of Khabausoker's wife Nefer-hetep-Hathor, along with the possibility that *Nⁱ-i-bw-nswt*, a temple official in Hathor's

cult at Dendera, dates to the late Third or early Fourth Dynasty as several have suggested⁶⁶—it is not certain that *ḥw.t-Ḥr* refers to the goddess or a location in this context at this time. The first certain evidence of Hathor receiving cult, and thus as a deity, occurs with Nefer-hetep-s, a daughter of King Radjedef/Djedefre, the third king in the Fourth Dynasty, who is attested as a priestess of *Ḥw.t-Ḥr nbt nht*, “Hathor, Mistress of the Sycamore,” from a statue base in his temple at Abu Roash in Lower Egypt.⁶⁷ Assuming that the *ḥw.t-Ḥr* might have indeed been the locus of royal rituals, we return to the question: how did the House of Horus, the center in which early kings were acclaimed as kings, morph into the later deity Hathor, if such actually happened?

While details about the celebrations that clearly occurred in HK29A in ancient Hierakonpolis—and elsewhere, at least in time—are unknown, that they occurred cannot be questioned even if the precise nature and purpose of such celebration remains unclear. However, since Hierakonpolis served as the locus of the royal deity Horus of Nekhen, it might be possible that it served as a—or even the—location of the House of Horus, *ḥw.t-Ḥr*. Were this to be the case, the kinds of activities involved in such celebrations, no matter the location, would demand personnel to carry them out, everyone from butchers to cooks to servers to maintainers of the area and organizers of the activities. Over time, at least some of those involved in such activities, such as celebrating the king’s acclamation or rejuvenation, as in a Heb Sed Festival, that is, the festival of royal renewal,⁶⁸ might be seen as servants of the sacred space. In this sacred space, a building, as suggested initially by Helck,⁶⁹ some of these personnel might then eventually morph into the priests and priestesses attested on seals and seal impressions collected

by Peter Kaplony⁷⁰ to serve in the festivities. Thus there appears the possibility of the development and existence of a considerable cadre of individuals who served the House of Horus, given that such a ceremonial space would have required tending and service, especially at times of cultic activities, leading to the need for individuals to have appointments and duties in it. Therefore it would not be surprising to have this location, as it gained increasing numinosity through the presence of ritual related to the Horus King, morph over time into a particular and related deity, in this case, *Hw.t-Hr*, Hathor. As a result, the personnel serving this area would have moved from service in rituals in a special place, *ḥw.t-Hr*, the House of Horus, to service in a special place felt to be numinous and eventually to service of a deity, *Hw.t-Hr*. Eventually the deity—*Hw.t-Hr*—is incorporated into personal names, as in the finely carved hieroglyph for *ḥw.t-Hr* in the *rn* , great name, of *nfr ḥtp ḥw.t-Hr*, Khabausoker's wife, late in the Third Dynasty or the beginning of the Fourth Dynasty,⁷¹ if indeed her name refers to the goddess, which remains an arguable point. There is no question, however, that by the early Fourth Dynasty, *ḥw.t-Hr* had begun to move from the impersonal aspect of a physical space and place to a deified concept, *Hw.t-Hr*, possibly as the partner, even the mother, of the Horus King and, of course, that *ḥw.t-Hr* had begun to develop into the anthropomorphic deity Hathor, who takes a central place in the famous triads of Menkaure, found in his valley temple.⁷²

Thus it is possible the nomination and/or acclamation of the leader in Hierakonpolis, occurring in the center HK29A, supported by the leaders of the people, might have led to its being called the House of Horus. In fact, Hierakonpolis served as a significant place related to the Heb Sed Festival as well as a stop on the royal journey that the *šmsw-Hrw*

(the Following/Followers of Horus) tour that the king and various attendants took to specific locations ostensibly to collect taxes and appear before his people,⁷³ though in reality, the journey's prime purpose was more likely ritualistic, at least partially reaffirming the king's relationship with the gods and his legitimacy.⁷⁴ It served also as an opportunity to make his presence known to the people. Thus it is possible that the unknown sources of the seals in Kaplony's materials need not be related to Hierakonpolis specifically but might be related to any center where the king might appear for any reason. In time, the title *ḥm-nṯr Ḥw.t-Ḥr* might quite logically come to be used as an honorific, as is possible for the priestesses and queens who bore the title in the Fourth Dynasty. It is also possible to see that the earliest seals with the O10 hieroglyph, *ḥw.t-Ḥr*, do not, in fact, refer to Hathor but rather to the location where the earliest Horus kings were acclaimed as kings—or perhaps in the initial stages carrying both meanings, and given our present information, the physical location appears quite likely to be at Hierakonpolis in southern Upper Egypt. Thus it is possible that the nomination, acclamation, or coronation of the leader in Hierakonpolis occurred in this center, supported by the leaders of the people, and led to a title as the House of Horus which was served by personnel eventually called servants of the House of Horus. In time its servants and others began to understand its sacred and numinous nature and referred to it as a deity, the goddess Hathor, perhaps initially as a kind of shorthand.

Hathor, Re, and the king

As a deity, Hathor's rise to dominance is thought to derive from her relation to Re. According to Helck, in the course

of the Third Dynasty, as the sun god began to supersede the king as world god, he gained a wife in Hathor.⁷⁵ This dominance becomes truly evident in the Fifth Dynasty with the king's assumption of the "Son of Re" name, $S\ddot{t}-R^{\text{f}}$, as part of his royal titulary. While the phrase actually appeared first as an epithet for Radjedef, $R^{\text{f}}-\ddot{d}d-f$, in the Fourth Dynasty, this was not the first time a king had used the sun god in his name; the second king of the Second Dynasty took as his Horus name Ra-Neb/Neb-Ra, $R^{\text{f}}-nb/Nb-R^{\text{f}}$.⁷⁶ Although all kings throughout Egyptian history were considered Horus kings, this king was the first to include the name "Re" in any part of his name or titulary, suggesting he felt a special relationship with the sun god, the creator god. And as noted, Radjedef, the third king of the Fourth Dynasty and son of Khufu, the builder of the great pyramid at Giza, was the next king to use the sun god's name as his epithet, "Son of Re," $S\ddot{t}-R^{\text{f}}$, to introduce his throne name, that is, his personal name.⁷⁷ Two more kings of the Fourth Dynasty carried "Son of Re" names: Khafre, another son of Khufu, and Menkaure, Khafre's son,⁷⁸ though regular use of "Son of Re" as a royal epithet did not occur until into the Fifth Dynasty. Importantly, however, as Miroslav Verner notes, the implications of Son of Re in the Fourth Dynasty differed from those in the Fifth Dynasty due to issues surrounding the inception of the later dynasty, a different family from the earlier one. In the Fourth Dynasty, this epithet indicated that the king was the direct offspring of the sun god, sharing his divine essence; he identified himself with the sun god. In contrast, in the Fifth Dynasty the incorporation of "Son of Re" suggested a filial relationship, a subordination of the king to the sun god.⁷⁹ From then on through the end of the Sixth Dynasty, the epithet appears with most, but not all, of the royal names.⁸⁰

It is during the Fifth Dynasty that Hathor and Re become very clearly linked, notably in the sun temples of that dynasty's kings, where both Re and Hathor receive cult.⁸¹ The two deities also begin to appear together on royal seals beginning with Neferirkare, the third king of the Fifth Dynasty, standing,⁸² facing each other with a *wꜥs*-scepter held between them, although one seal shows them seated with the cartouche of Djedkare, the penultimate king of the Fifth Dynasty, between them.⁸³ In most cases, Hathor, with or without Re, carries the *ꜥnh* sign, along with the *wꜥs*-scepter, an instrument which carries a number of connotations,⁸⁴ primarily that of dominion over the universe or the land, depending on who carries it. Those who may carry it are limited, however, and Geoffrey Graham states that "[o]nly goddesses personifying the eye of the sun god hold the *wꜥs*-staff."⁸⁵ As the "house," Hathor "contains the solar child and the eye of the god" and the god is Re, "both the father and the child of Hathor,"⁸⁶ a concept identifying her as a sky goddess. Apparently the ever-increasing rise of Re's importance and place in the world of kings in the Fifth Dynasty, clearly surpassing that of Horus, particularly as the father of the king—after all, the king was the Horus King—led to the clarification and further definition of and emphasis on Hathor's position as the mother of the king and the spouse of Re. Perhaps this definition becomes most clear in the *Sꜥ-Hw.t-Hr*, "Son of Hathor," throne name that Pepi I, commonly considered the second king in the Sixth Dynasty (though a king named Userkare (I) probably reigned for a short period following Teti),⁸⁷ used in addition to the now expected *Sꜥ-Rꜥ*, "Son of Re," name.⁸⁸ The latter usually appears as simply "Pepi," while the former presents itself fully as *Sꜥ-Hw.t-Hr nbt-ꜥwnt*, "Son of Hathor, Mistress of Dendera," that is sometimes written with her hieroglyphic name only and other times

shown as a seated deity.⁸⁹ In one case, a cartouche of Pepi I includes the following hieroglyphs: 𓆎tm-nb-𓆎wnw , Atum, Lord of Heliopolis, followed by $\text{S𓆎-Hw.t-Hr nbt-𓆎wnt}$, Son of Hathor, Mistress of Dendera, and concluding with his simple *Ppy* name.⁹⁰ Clearly he thus expressed his special relationships to Atum, the primeval god and head of the Heliopolitan Ennead, as well as to Hathor in Dendera.

Hathor and Menkaure: triads and dyads

Now in anthropomorphic form, Hathor's relation to the king becomes truly emphasized with the triads that George Reisner discovered in Menkaure's Valley Temple.⁹¹ Clearly by the time of the conception of these triads, with both Hathor and a clearly identified nome deity, the goddess has morphed into an active anthropomorphic deity with a special relation to the king. In his detailed volume on Dendera, Fischer points to a seal of Menkaure showing Hathor seated with horns, on which the king is described as mn-𓆎b Hw.t-Hr , which he does not translate but which Kaplony states stands for mr𓆎 , "beloved," the whole thus meaning "beloved of Hathor,"⁹² though literally it means something like "firm [in] Hathor's heart." Such seals showing Hathor related to kings continue to occur during the Old Kingdom at least through Pepi I with his S𓆎-Hw.t-Hr name, in this case, Son of Hathor, Mistress of Dendera, suggesting he had a special relationship with Hathor in that location.⁹³

A pair of papers published by Florence Dunn Friedman describes how the triads of Menkaure emphasized the dominant role of Hathor. In each of the four complete ones, and clearly in one of the incomplete ones, the goddess is in physical contact with the king, who is invariably on her left, legitimizing him.⁹⁴ This legitimation comprises an

essential part of the Heb Sed ritual as well as an acclamation in this world and the next, and F. D. Friedman notes here that the “Heb Sed confirmation is not shown as coming from multiple gods; it comes from Hathor.”⁹⁵ In this depiction then, one can find very strong support for the concept that by the time of Menkaure, Hathor has truly morphed from the location of acclamation, confirmation, and/or legitimation of the kingship—if such is indeed the case—into an active anthropomorphic deity. It is clear that the relation between Hathor and the Horus King, female and male, forms the central focus of these triads.

The Hathor of the four complete triads carries two different epithets: in the triads where she is standing, she is *Hw.t-Hr n nht nb m swt nbt*, “Hathor, Mistress of the Sycamore in all her swt-cult places,” while in the seated triad, she is *Hw.t-Hr n nht nbt*, “Hathor, Mistress of the Sycamore.”⁹⁶ In each case, the king is “beloved of Hathor,” *mry-Hw.t-Hr*. As F. D. Friedman understands these triads—unearthed by George Reisner along with fragments, also found by him in the initial excavation, of at least two others⁹⁷—initially there were at least six complete ones, and fragments for at least three more, for a minimum total of nine. On considering the nature of the sculptures overall, however, she speculates that it is more likely there were ten or twelve,⁹⁸ one of which was likely to be another seated triad, a surmise drawn from reconstruction of the fragments.⁹⁹ Each of the nome deities represents, as indicated by the inscriptions, an estate from which the king’s cult was provisioned, for each deity promises an offering forever.¹⁰⁰ The ultimate understanding is that these provisions come from Hathor via each nome deity, each of whom then makes an offering to the king as follows: *rd^ḥ.(ḥ) n.k ht nb nfr^ḥ my rsy*, “I have given you every good thing which is in the south ...”¹⁰¹ As F. D. Friedman

notes, this provisioning, while actual in some cases, can also be symbolic, and each of the nomes involved housed cult centers devoted to Hathor. Thus the triads within Menkaure's Valley Temple suggest they might represent a gathering of Hathoric cult places during his time.¹⁰² She even hypothesizes that Dendera, a known cult place for Hathor, might have been included on one of the incomplete or partial triads.¹⁰³



Figure 2.6 Menkaure Triad: Hathor, Menkaure, and nome deity of the Seventh Upper Egyptian nome of Hu/Diospolis, coifed with Bat figure. Photo by Werner Forman/Universal Images Group/Getty Images 152198722.

In her second 2011 study, F. D. Friedman identified the embedded sense of movement in all aspects of the bodies: legs, torsos, hands, arms, and heads.¹⁰⁴ Particularly interesting, however, is the centrality of the king in these

sculptures: in each of the complete triads, his is the only face looking directly at the audience or spectator. In each of the other figures, including Hathor, faces look slightly outward, be it left or right,¹⁰⁵ thus “making him technically the primary subject,”¹⁰⁶ even when Hathor is seated between the king who is on her left and the Hermopolitan nome deity on her right. In the end, then, even though the physical contact depicted provides his divine legitimation, the subtlety of the facial directionality makes him the center.

In addition to the triads, the dyad of the king and a female from Menkaure’s Valley Temple provides more pertinent material for this discussion, as there exist several possible identifications for the female (see Figure 2.7). She is commonly identified as Khamerernebtj II, Menkaure’s wife,¹⁰⁷ as Reisner himself did.¹⁰⁸ I have also suggested, however, that as Hathor rose to dominance, the queen began to identify herself with the goddess.¹⁰⁹ Now building on F. D. Friedman’s careful analysis, which takes into account the work done on the Galarza tomb at Giza, I note that the higher status female of this complex tomb was Khamerernebtj I, while the second in status was Khamerernebtj II, Menkaure’s wife who lacked the *mwt nswt-bꜣty*, “mother of the king,” title,¹¹⁰ so the common conclusion that the female of the dyad is, in fact, Khamerernebtj II is unlikely. In fact, as F. D. Friedman notes, human queens do not appear on a scale with their spouses—as this one does—that is, in dyads.¹¹¹ At the same time, she points out that “goddesses, like queens, appear in Fourth Dynasty dyads, but on an equal scale to the king.”¹¹² Therefore, while the female in Menkaure’s dyad shows many human features such as “dropped nipples, breast sag” with a “slight tummy allud[ing],” to a “woman who has borne children,”¹¹³ the equality of size with the king

reflects more the typical king-goddess portrayals of the time. F. D. Friedman concludes, “There is thus a fluid interplay between features ordinarily reserved for a mortal and for a goddess, that is the king’s mother or Hathor.”¹¹⁴ Indeed, his mother, Khamerernebt I, initially births him, and in this mortuary context, she rebirths him, all of which fits with Hathor as well as the womb or House of Horus for the king. Ultimately, then, the female of the dyad is actually Menkaure’s deceased mother “who serves as the human complement to Hathor”¹¹⁵ despite the unusual size relationship.



Figure 2.7 Dyad of Menkaure (Mycerinus) and Queen. Photo © 2019 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MFA 11.1738.

The interplay between a mortal and a deity again brings to the fore questions about the effect of such a relationship

on the mortal involved, given the understanding that such interactions change the essential being of any human participant. In this case, however, it can raise the issue of the effect of the king in his divine role on a human being. We meet such an incident in the Old Kingdom in the encounter of “Rē-Wer,” R^ꜥ-wr, who in the role of sem-priest—that is, the priest who, as the son of the deceased, participated in the Opening of the Mouth rituals that were of such great importance in the funeral ceremonies, as well as carrying other priestly titles including those linked to the royal wardrobe—with King Neferkare when the priest tripped over or accidentally struck the king’s staff.¹¹⁶ The reality as reported cannot be clearly determined,¹¹⁷ as it depends on the reading of the hieroglyphs, but the ultimate end was that the king commanded that Rē-Wer “Be Sound”; in other words, he is commanded not to suffer any consequences for this encounter with divine material.¹¹⁸ James P. Allen argues that the language of the text, which persistently uses *ḥm*, “body,” as in human body, rather than *nswt-bꜥty*, “King of Upper and Lower Egypt,” after the opening phrase, might equally point simply to the superior forgiving the inferior for the disruption.¹¹⁹ John Baines, on the other hand, disagrees, approaching the material by noting that “[w]ith Rea-wer the king made a mistake that must have had potentially fatal implications in the beliefs of the time.”¹²⁰ Nigel Strudwick, commenting on the same text, suggests “[e]ither Rewer had to be magically ‘cleansed’ of his unintentional contact with the king, or else the king absolved him in this life and the next for having disrupted the ceremony.”¹²¹ Each of these scholars, no matter his conclusion regarding this particular text, understood that contact with the king as Horus was dangerous. Yet the human priest remained alive and well.

The divinity of the king presented in the Rē-Wer

narrative is reflected notably in the New Kingdom presentations of the god Atum having intercourse with the mortal queen to conceive the king, exemplified both textually and graphically in the temples of Hatshepsut, Amenhotep III, and Ramesses II, at Deir el-Bahri, Luxor, and Medinet Habu respectively.¹²² Here again fluidity appears in relation to the queen as the king's mother, *mwt nswt-b'ity*, for if she bears the king as a result of intercourse with a god, then something of the king is divine either as Horus or the Son of Re, and presumably her pregnancy resulting from divine intercourse alters her essentially. Though not answering the question of what that effect might be, in the end, the female of the Menkaure dyad is both human and divine, and the statue's presence in Menkaure's Valley Temple points to the role of his earthly mother, Khamerernebt I, suggesting her role carries such Hathoric implications as "the vehicle of his rebirth,"¹²³ "presenting him and legitimizing him,"¹²⁴ and serving as a complement to the triads in that Hathor in the triads and Khamerernebt I in the dyad "facilitate the king's ongoing birth, presentation and divine legitimation in the Sed Festival,"¹²⁵ and, I would argue, with his reception in the next world.

Also in the theme of the interactions of the divine with mortals are texts and depictions that involve the goddess nursing the king, sometimes in her cow form as in Hatshepsut's Eighteenth Dynasty temple in Deir el-Bahri (see Figure 2.8) but occasionally—and often when it is Isis doing the nursing—in human form. This raises another question related to the role of the female in Menkaure's dyad: what is the effect on the king being nursed by the goddess? Does the divine milk make him divine in some way, he a being who will die in time? At a minimum, it intends to differentiate him (her, in the case of Hatshepsut,

who is presented nursing from the Hathor cow) from the normal human being, truly showing the ruler as the mediator between the divine and human worlds as depicted by the royal serekh. These points surely impact the king's initial acclamation and accession, of course after the fact since the king is not the king until he actually becomes king, as well as his mortuary acceptance into the world of the gods. In addition, in terms of the king's relation to the world of the gods, it is appropriate to consider Jürgen von Beckerath's analysis: "In the temple inscriptions, the Pharaoh always emphasized anew his quality as son of the deity who was worshipped there."¹²⁶



Figure 2.8 The goddess Hathor, in the form of a cow, suckling the Pharaoh, painted relief, Chapel of Hathor, Mortuary Temple of Hatshepsut, Deir el-Bahari. Photo by De Agostini/Getty Images 182129293.

Thus Hathor appeared as an anthropomorphic deity with a special relation to royalty in form and function by

the mid-Fourth Dynasty and continued so throughout the Fifth and into the Sixth Dynasties. She clearly had replaced Neith as the early royal goddess, and as Marianne Galvin and Gilliam have each shown, the number of priestesses who served both Hathor and Neith declines to priestesses serving only Hathor as the Old Kingdom wears on.¹²⁷ Thus the Menkaure triads present a major shift and a high point for Hathor in relation to the king and religious practice in general in the Old Kingdom that continues on through the Old Kingdom and even into Eleventh Dynasty when Mentuhotep II, like Pepi I, designates himself as Son of Hathor.¹²⁸

Hathor in the Pyramid Texts

It is not until the Pyramid Texts—currently known, as noted previously, from the sarcophagus chambers and subterranean walls of the royal pyramids of the last king of the Fifth Dynasty, four kings and five queens from the Sixth Dynasty, and one king from the Eighth Dynasty—that clear written narrative materials about Hathor appear. But Hathor is notable by her scarcity in these texts, despite her appearance in Menkaure's triads in the Fourth Dynasty, Pepi I's designation as the *Sḥ-Hw.t-Hr*, "Son of Hathor," in the Sixth, and her ubiquitous presence on seals and seal impressions from Menkaure on. In fact, she appears in only three distinct texts in the pyramids, the oldest of which appears in Unis's tomb and affirms the king's appropriateness for entry to the divine body, as noted above in PT 303, §466a, where the king is affirmed the son of Hathor as well as the son of Osiris and of Geb. Is it possible here to find in his sonship of Hathor something of her background or origins?

In the second text, the king, in describing his

appearance, a text first attested in Teti's pyramid, states, "My kilt [which is] on me is Hathor" (PT 335, §546), a description that recalls the bovine heads visible on the kilt the king wears on the Narmer Palette. In this text, the king attests that he is, through his adornment, related to Hathor and to the falcon-god—the king exhibiting his power with the mace is matched by the falcon hooking his enemy, Lower Egypt represented by the sedge, that is papyrus, plants—and thus he is equipped to join the gods.

Finally, that Hathor is a deity with the sun set between cow horns appears explicitly in the third and last of the Pyramid Texts mentioning her: "I am that eye of yours that is on Hathor's brow ..." (PT 405, §705a). Here the king claims to be the sun or a star which is on the goddess's horns,¹²⁹ and actually appears placed as a star on the goddess's head as appears in some representations of Bat.

Hw.t Hr as the "Mansion of Horus" in the Pyramid Texts

There are, however, several Pyramid Texts in which the presence of *hw.t Hr* does not indicate the goddess—apparent both from the context and from the iconography—but rather these occurrences refer to *hw.t-Hr* as "Mansion of Horus" or "Horus's Compound" (PT 485, §1025d).¹³⁰ Curiously, save for the different translations, there is no commentary known to me about this anomalous understanding of the hieroglyphic form in which the falcon glyph stands outside the house glyph but is read as mansion or compound of Horus; that is, there is no suggestion of a possible reference to the old House of Horus. All but one of the occurrences of these texts appear only in Pepi I's pyramid, the pyramid with by far the most extensive body of mortuary texts.¹³¹ The first text, repeated

three times, reads, “he is one who will go up to Horus’s Compound that belongs to the sky” (PT 485, §§1025d, 1026c, 1027c), while the second reads simply, “Any god who will receive my arm when I have gone to Horus’s Compound in the Cool Waters, his ka will be justified” (PT 539, §1327b). In the third Pyramid Text, one which involves cursing with the well-known “giving the finger” gesture (PT 534, §1278b),¹³² *Hwt- Hr* is written as a single sign, as the name of Hathor is customarily written and is translated as “Horus’s Compound” or “Mansion of Horus.” In this case, unlike the others, despite the writing, the context leads to the translation of “Horus’s Compound,” a context related to the actual pyramid and its divine area.

Hathor’s early cult places: Dendera and Gebelein

Hathor evidenced early relationships with Dendera most notably and then with Gebelein, both locations in Upper Egypt. In his very detailed 1968 volume on Dendera, H. G. Fischer observed that the earlier researcher Clarence Fisher unearthed artifacts dating to the Archaic Period in a cemetery related to ancient Dendera in the Sixth Upper Egyptian nome, and although no name is discernable and thus any specific date is lacking, the writing suggests strongly a very early date.¹³³ By the Fourth Dynasty, however, a number of artifacts provide evidence of overseers of priests and at least six priestesses who served *Hwt-Hr nbt Twt*, that is, “Hathor of Dendera.”¹³⁴ With the Fifth Dynasty and monumental evidence of the rise of Re in the kings’ sun temples, there existed a cult for Hathor alongside a cult for Re, with priestesses serving both, as documented by Galvin and Gillam in their separate works.

Thus despite the fact that Hathor’s presence in the Pyramid Texts is minimal, suggesting that during the Old

Kingdom she clearly does not function as a mortuary deity, that a cadre of priestesses (and priests, in fact) serve her makes clear that she receives cult at various places during the Old Kingdom in addition to her cults linked to the sun temples and Re, most notably in the Sixth Dynasty. Indeed, a model sistrum inscribed with the full titulary of Teti, the first king of the Sixth Dynasty, includes an inscription that he was “beloved of Hathor, lady of Denderah,” providing evidence of her importance to this king, as the sistrum is presented to her by him.¹³⁵ And as we have also seen, the following king, Pepi I, actually designated himself *Sḫ- Hw.t-Hr nbt Ḳwn.t*, “Son of Hathor, Mistress of Dendera,” in addition to the customary “Son of Re” name,¹³⁶ and as noted, numerous artifacts related to him have been discovered within the Dendera temple for which he served as a patron.¹³⁷ Clearly Hathor received cult at Dendera and was known elsewhere as Lady or Mistress of Dendera, even as far away as Byblos on the Levantine coast.

Gebelein, somewhat to the south of Dendera and administered by the Theban nome but lying within the Hierakonpolis sphere of influence, also served as a cult center for Hathor, though exactly how early it became related to the goddess is far from clear. However, by the time of Mentuhotep II, Egypt’s unifier at the end of the First Intermediate Period, a king who, like Pepi I, assumed the title of “Son of Hathor, Mistress of Dendera,” no doubt exists that the temple of Gebelein served as a cult place for this deity¹³⁸ by the middle of the Eleventh Dynasty. Indeed, archaeological work has shown that Gebelein was the location of a very old temple and considered a sacred place well before Mentuhotep II, as it was set on two hills in an area lacking such high places.

In the ancient world, high places were commonly perceived as sacred, and a pair, as in this location, meant

the location drew even more interest. Initially explored by French Egyptologist Gaston Maspero from 1884 to 1886, serious excavations were carried out in the early twentieth century by Italian teams led by Ernesto Schiaparelli, beginning in 1910 and continuing into 1920, followed in the 1930s by Giulio Farina.¹³⁹ The 1910 campaign unearthed a fragment of a royal relief from Dynasty Two or Three, providing evidence of a sanctuary at that time, from which Anna Maria Donadoni Roveri deduced that the relief of the king “provides evidence” confirming the existence of the cult of Hathor and of a sanctuary dedicated to the goddess at an early date,¹⁴⁰ though how early it occurred and what led her to this conclusion, Donadoni does not specify.

Ludwig D. Morenz’s more recent discussion takes a different approach to the early remains at Gebelein, which he dates even earlier to the First and Second Dynasties,¹⁴¹ noting that the importance of high places as sacred areas in religions worldwide suggests that the early elevated sacred edifice at Gebelein related to the king rather than to a deity, serving as a major central place for royal religion.¹⁴² Nevertheless, in discussing the presence of an early temple, he refers to it as a Hathor temple that can be followed from the Early Dynastic through to the Roman Period, apparently without question.¹⁴³ He also suggests that there is reference, in Hathor’s name as “House of Horus,” to the distant heavenly deity, *ḥr*, “the Distant One,” which is certainly appropriate for the area with surrounding mountains. He thus proposes the possibility that she might originally be a mountain deity.¹⁴⁴ The lack of evidence for Hathor prior to the late Third Dynasty truly calls into question the possibility of this temple serving as a cult place for her in the First, Second, or even early Third Dynasty, much less having a temple devoted to her.

In another recent study, Eliza Fiore Marochetti observes

that the region of Gebelein, currently called “two mountains” in Arabic, was designated *ḥnrtj*, “two rocks,” at least as early the Fourth Dynasty.¹⁴⁵ She also notes that the location was occupied from Naqada I (4000–3400 BCE), as is evident from its Predynastic necropolis and the massive temple built there during the Early Dynastic period.¹⁴⁶ However, in these early times, previous suggestions aside, no specific deity can be identified in relation to the temple,¹⁴⁷ although there is no question that in time, Gebelein served as a cult center for Hathor and that a later edifice there was called *pr Ḥw.t-Ḥr*, “House of Hathor,” Greek Pathryis.¹⁴⁸ Indeed by the Middle Kingdom, a very clear cult to Hathor had appeared there which lasted into the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods.

Obviously then, both Dendera and Gebelein, each with remains dating back to the early dynasties, served as early important cult places for Hathor,¹⁴⁹ although a date when Gebelein became a cult center for her remains uncertain. Other Old Kingdom cult locations for Hathor include Memphis, Cusae with its necropolis at Meir, Bubastis, Kom el-Hisn, Tehne-Akoris, and Beni Hasan.¹⁵⁰

Hathor in Byblos, Mistress of Byblos

Hathor’s presence in Byblos, an ancient city on the northern Levantine coast, first becomes evident through late Old Kingdom artifacts foreshadowing her subsequent and extensive presence there. Egyptian relations with Byblos on the north Syrian coast extend back into the third millennium BCE and may have begun as early as Naqada II,¹⁵¹ in the last half of the fourth millennium BCE, as evidenced by traded materials.¹⁵² The literature on Byblos and its excavations notes that the heights on which the later city developed were first settled in Neolithic times and the first

urban settlement occurred early in Early Bronze Age II (EB II), around 2900 BCE, the Egyptian Early Dynastic Period, while the earliest foundations of the temple, the core of which was dedicated to the Lady/Mistress of Byblos, Ba'alat Gubla, appear to have been laid somewhere around 2800 BCE,¹⁵³ still during Egypt's Early Dynastic Period.¹⁵⁴ Evidence of early relations between the two areas appears in the timbers of Syrian origin found in First Dynasty tombs at Abydos along with some pottery types of both north and south Syrian styles,¹⁵⁵ likely gained through trade, although we might argue these items came to Egypt via an intermediary. Such trade as occurred, however, appears to have been sporadic at best, at least until the time of the Old Kingdom, when the importation of substantial quantities of cedar began in earnest.¹⁵⁶ In fact, it appears that with the strengthening and centralization of the Egyptian monarchy, beginning with the Third Dynasty kings Djoser and Sekhemkhet, demand for luxury products developed, leading to increased relations with areas outside Egypt proper that could supply such goods: gold from Nubia, ivory and spices from other points in Africa, Sinai's turquoise, and cedar and other coniferous woods from Lebanon.¹⁵⁷ Regular contact between Egypt and the northern Levant including Byblos began in earnest with the Fourth Dynasty, around 2575 BCE, evidenced by the earliest use of cedar beams, *mrw*-wood,¹⁵⁸ in Khufu's royal ship.¹⁵⁹ In addition, clear Old Kingdom–Early Bronze Age connections appear in finds at Byblos that carry the names of Fourth Dynasty kings Khufu, Khafre, and Menkaure; Fifth Dynasty kings Sahure and Unis; and Sixth Dynasty kings Teti, Pepi I, and Pepi II.¹⁶⁰

From at least the Old Kingdom on, Egyptians considered the Byblite goddess, the “Mistress or Lady of Byblos,” *nbt kb*n, to be Hathor,¹⁶¹ but although artifacts provide

evidence that Hathor was present in Byblos,¹⁶² at least as early as the Old Kingdom,¹⁶³ no epithet from that time states she actually was viewed as the Mistress or Lady of Byblos. Instead we find her called Mistress of Dendera, exemplified by a statuette found at Byblos from the time of Pepi I, with a papyrus on his lap, in which she is designated as “Mistress of Dendera who lives in Byblos.”¹⁶⁴ In addition, various additional artifacts found in Byblos bear inscriptions relating Pepi to Hathor as Mistress of Dendera. One example, a fragment of an alabaster offering plate or disk, reads, “Son [of Hathor], Mistress of Dendera, Pepi [I],”¹⁶⁵ while another fragment from the same or a similar object reads, “Son [of Hathor], Mistress of Dendera, Pepi [I], falcons of gold, Ha[thor],”¹⁶⁶ and yet a third example, a pair of fragments from an alabaster offering plate of Pepi I, clearly mentions Hathor of Dendera.¹⁶⁷ Thus in the Sixth Dynasty at Byblos, she appears as Hathor, Mistress of Dendera, not Hathor, Mistress of Byblos. While material may yet come to light showing her to be Mistress of Byblos in the late Old Kingdom, in fact no evidence currently known presents her with the *nbt kbn*, “Mistress of Byblos,” epithet until the Middle Kingdom, and at which time it appears in Coffin Text Spell 61, a text that states, “Hathor, Lady of Byblos, makes the steering-oar of your bark.”¹⁶⁸ In addition, F. L. Griffith reports some Middle Kingdom correspondence from Kahun in which Hathor is mentioned with the epithet “Lady of Byblos,”¹⁶⁹ while Ranke, reflecting the shipping aspect of Hathor, records a name from Beni Hasan that reads “Beautiful are the steering oars of Hathor.”¹⁷⁰ And curiously, although Egyptologists and Near Eastern scholars similarly have considered that the references to the “Mistress of Byblos,” in the New Kingdom Amarna letters, the correspondence between various rulers and leaders from the Levant and even Mesopotamia,

refer to Hathor, her name does not appear even once in the entire corpus.¹⁷¹

In the end, it is clear that Hathor was not the original Mistress of Byblos,¹⁷² despite her Old Kingdom presence there. She does, however, begin to appear regularly in various other locations outside Egypt, even to the point of receiving cult as she did in Byblos, at least by the inception of the Middle Kingdom, as the work of Geraldine Pinch on votive offerings to Hathor shows.¹⁷³ Pinch's work presents clear evidence supporting the understanding of the deity's foreign presence in a detailed discussion of votive offerings to Hathor, honing in on five border and foreign areas in which Hathor received cult: Faras, dating to the Second Intermediate Period and located between the first and second cataracts;¹⁷⁴ Mirgissa, a Middle Kingdom site located south at the second cataract;¹⁷⁵ Serabit el-Khadim, dating to the Middle Kingdom and located in the Sinai mountains where the turquoise was mined along with copper¹⁷⁶ and malachite;¹⁷⁷ Timna, a New Kingdom site on the eastern edge of the Sinai Peninsula which was a source of copper over several millennia;¹⁷⁸ and Gebel Zeit, a New Kingdom site on the east coast of Egypt and the west coast of the Red Sea where Egyptians mined galena, the principal ore of lead.¹⁷⁹

Hathor, the traveling deity

That it was Hathor who traveled and appears in foreign areas in the third and second millennia BCE, rather than another deity, likely derives from her early association with celestial bodies. Certainly this idea lies behind Siegfried Morenz's explanation of CT Spell 61,¹⁸⁰ when he observes that Hathor's role was to steer the ship of the dead, a celestial barque.¹⁸¹ Schafik Allam viewed her as

linked to the heavenly journey of the deceased king and thus with navigation and steering, a role derived from her relation to trade and transportation on the Nile and other waters. Indeed another text, Coffin Text Spell 623, relates Hathor to boats in its incipit “Spell for going aboard the bark of Hathor.”¹⁸² In still another example, this one from the Old Kingdom level at Dendera, Merra (*Mrrr*^f) carries the title of “chief of the transport,” understood to be that of Hathor, lady of Dendereh.¹⁸³ From such a role it would be a natural step to relate her to foreign travel and trade, similar to the kind carried out by means of the so-called Byblos boats.¹⁸⁴ These boats were clearly a part of the Egyptian scene from at least the Fifth Dynasty, when we find a relief of four of them depicted in the mortuary temple complex of Sahure. Another relief of two Byblos boats comes from the causeway of Unis’s temple complex, further attesting to an active interchange with Byblos.¹⁸⁵

In her role as guide for the deceased in the celestial barque, Hathor would have represented an important figure for sailors and seafaring traders whose observation of celestial bodies was crucial to successful navigation.¹⁸⁶ In fact, scholars have generally considered Hathor to be particularly related to boats and navigation, and S. Morenz noted Dieter Müller’s arguable conclusion that “‘Hathor, Lady of Byblos’ was the only deity to be connected with navigation.”¹⁸⁷ Indeed, according to Adolf Erman, Hathor functioned as the patron of mariners,¹⁸⁸ and Ramses Moftah noted that her patronage covered the Nile, the heavens, and foreign lands.¹⁸⁹ In addition, the Sixth Dynasty mastaba tomb of Mereruka, who functioned as Vizier under Teti, includes a scene including the statement, “Beautiful wind of Hathor,”¹⁹⁰ which clearly suggests to sailors that Hathor was the deity related to their means of propulsion. Nevertheless, despite the extensive evidence of

shrines, cult places, and temples dedicated to Hathor in border and foreign areas, none predates the Middle Kingdom, and so it becomes very clear that in fact the Sixth Dynasty scribal inscription designating her “Mistress of Dendera who lives in Byblos” provides the earliest known certain evidence of her presence outside Egypt and its borders. Thus it seems that because she was successful in foreign dealings between Egypt and Byblos, traders and sailors wished to stick with a good thing and take her to other foreign locales, even where seafaring was limited.¹⁹¹ And because she seems to be the only Egyptian deity connected with navigation, the protector of “shipping on the Nile, to foreign ports, and in the sky,”¹⁹² she may have arrived in Byblos as protector of the sailors and shipping, since this function did not come from the Byblite goddess. In fact Bleeker refers to her as “the pilot of the sun-ship, in which quality her title is ‘mistress of the ship’.”¹⁹³ He thus concludes that Hathor’s role as patron of the sailors and traders to Byblos led to the identification of the Mistress of Byblos with Hathor.¹⁹⁴

In the end, it is clear that a deity known as the Mistress of Byblos preceded Hathor in Byblos, but that trade with Egypt in the Old Kingdom eventually led to the Egyptian identification of the goddess of Byblos with the Egyptian goddess.¹⁹⁵ The driving force behind this relationship appears to be a combination of the economically protective activities of the deities and Hathor’s relation to shipping. A resulting question remains, however: is it Hathor’s relation to shipping and consequent role as protector of sailors that led to her identification as a goddess of foreign lands where Egyptians had a presence? If not, what did? Other questions include when and how did she become the one who steers the ship of the dead? And which came first, her activity in the present world or in the Otherworld? While

many questions remain—and clearly need further research—the presence of Hathor in Byblos, a celestial and cow deity central to herdsmen and mariners alike, may well derive precisely from an ancient connection to a cattle spirit which assisted desert pastoralists in caring for their cattle, moving them from place to place in the eastern Sahara by means of celestial navigation, a skill easily and naturally transformed to travel by boat along the Mediterranean littoral to Byblos.

Excursus 1: Bat

As is well known by many Egyptologists, the long identification of the familiar bovine heads with incurved horns, such as those figures topping both the recto and the verso of the Narmer Palette as Hathor, commonly referred to as the “Hathor-emblem,”¹ was challenged by Henry G. Fischer in his 1962 discussion of similar heads. He suggested that they instead represent the goddess Bat or a Bat fetish seen on the early standards of the Seventh Upper Egyptian nome of Hu, that is, Diospolis Parva (see Figure 2.6).² Given that Bat was rarely identified in writing other than early titles—she was first known in texts connected with the Seventh Upper Egyptian nome in the shrine of the Middle Kingdom King Senwosret I at Karnak³—the situation until Fischer’s analysis might be considered acceptable. Yet even now, over a half century after his detailed and lucid discussion, these early and very distinctive figures are still referred to as Hathor, albeit occasionally and with hesitation.⁴

Actually, the literature on Bat proves to be more extensive and complex than many might think. The *bAt*-figure appears in various different contexts throughout Egyptian history, beginning with sherds, inscriptions, and palettes from the Predynastic and Early Dynastic Periods; as part of official dress related to the king and high officials, frequently as a pendant; once in the Pyramid Texts, identified as the female *bꜣ* (PT 506, §1096b);⁵ and as part of the sistrum, a cultic object used in the worship of Hathor at least from the early Middle Kingdom on.⁶ The frontal depiction and the relation to the animal world of this figure—generally but not universally understood to be a cow—makes the figure even more interesting, but it also

emphasizes the need to review and synthesize previous studies. Significantly this figure maintained an iconographic and cultic distinction from Hathor throughout pharaonic history.

The Bat or the Bat-fetish figure appears first in Predynastic and Early Dynastic contexts, notably on the well-known palette from Naqada II (c. 3500–3200 BCE) Gerza, the cemetery related to Meidum in Lower Egypt; on a sealing from Abydos Grave U-210 at the Umm el-Qaab cemetery near Abydos in Upper Egypt; on several sherds, an ostraca, and a bowl from Hierakonpolis, also in Upper Egypt; and of course on the Narmer Palette, similarly from Upper Egyptian Hierakonpolis.

The Gerzean Palette (see Figure E1.1) presents a frontal figure that appears to be a bovine of some sort, commonly referred to as a cow, with incurved horns and ears sticking out clearly from the sides of the head, adorned with stars on the tips of the ears and on the tips horns, as well as a star located on or just above the middle of the head; these stars lead early to an understanding of the figure's relationship to the celestial world.⁷

The porphyry bowl from Hierakonpolis (see Figure 2.3) shows a similar image on its rim as reconstructed by E. Martin Burgess and Anthony J. Arkell in the 1950s, but here the figure with stars appears on the opposite rim from a *b*-bird.⁸ In his 1955 announcement of the bowl, Arkell referred to the figure as Hathor,⁹ while in a later note, he suggested that the bird was the Jaribu or saddle-billed stork (*Ephippiohynchus senegalensis*),¹⁰ noting that the coloring of this black-and-white bird suggested Hathor's relationship to the night sky,¹¹ in other words, implicitly relating them to each other. Although the reconstruction of the head and the bird places the figures on opposite sides of the rim, this need not be the case, and Fischer has

suggested that they may actually have been side by side, thus forming a hieroglyphic group.¹² If this were the case, one may consider it, as has Fischer, as clearly designating Bat,¹³ with the *b*-bird serving as a phonetic complement, while Edel notes that the dropped “t” of the feminine was common in this period.¹⁴



Figure E1.1 Gerzean Palette, Bat, dated to Naqada IIC/IID, likely Naqada

Clearly these examples provide evidence that, even before the Narmer Palette, a figure with a bovine head with horns decorated with stars was important. However, figures with similar horns but lacking stars also appeared very early. For example, Stan Hendrickx identified as Bat the pot mark of a horned head on the recent find of a fragmentary polished red bowl in the fill of Tomb 16 in the elite Cemetery HK6 at Hierakonpolis, dating it to early Naqada II, perhaps the oldest known (see Figures E1.2a and E1.2b).¹⁵ He stated that it “obviously represent[s] the emblem of the goddess Bat.”¹⁶ He compared the pot mark, which was incised after firing, to a previously found ostrakon with a very similar figure from the Hierakonpolis religious center at HK29A (see Figure E1.3), which was actually incised not only after slip was applied on the original vessel but also was broken. In their discussion of this latter ostrakon, Hendrickx and Renée F. Friedman compare it to the figure on the Gerzean Palette, referring to the figure on the ostrakon as Bat, suggesting that this latter ostrakon, like the one from HK6, depicts the form of a cow-figure incised on the interior, while the complex exterior decoration with a bull represents the triumph of order over chaos, a very common and extremely important pharaonic scene in early Egypt and throughout its history.¹⁷

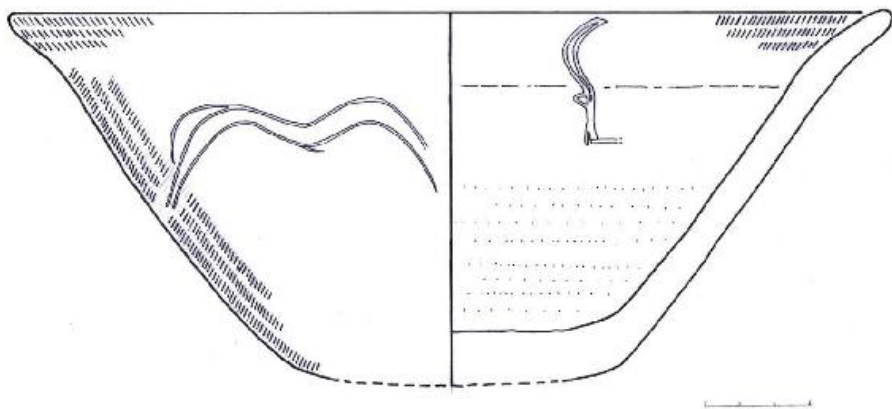


Figure E1.2a Drawing of a bowl fragment with a Bat pot mark from Tomb 16, cemetery HK6. Courtesy of Hierakonpolis Expedition.

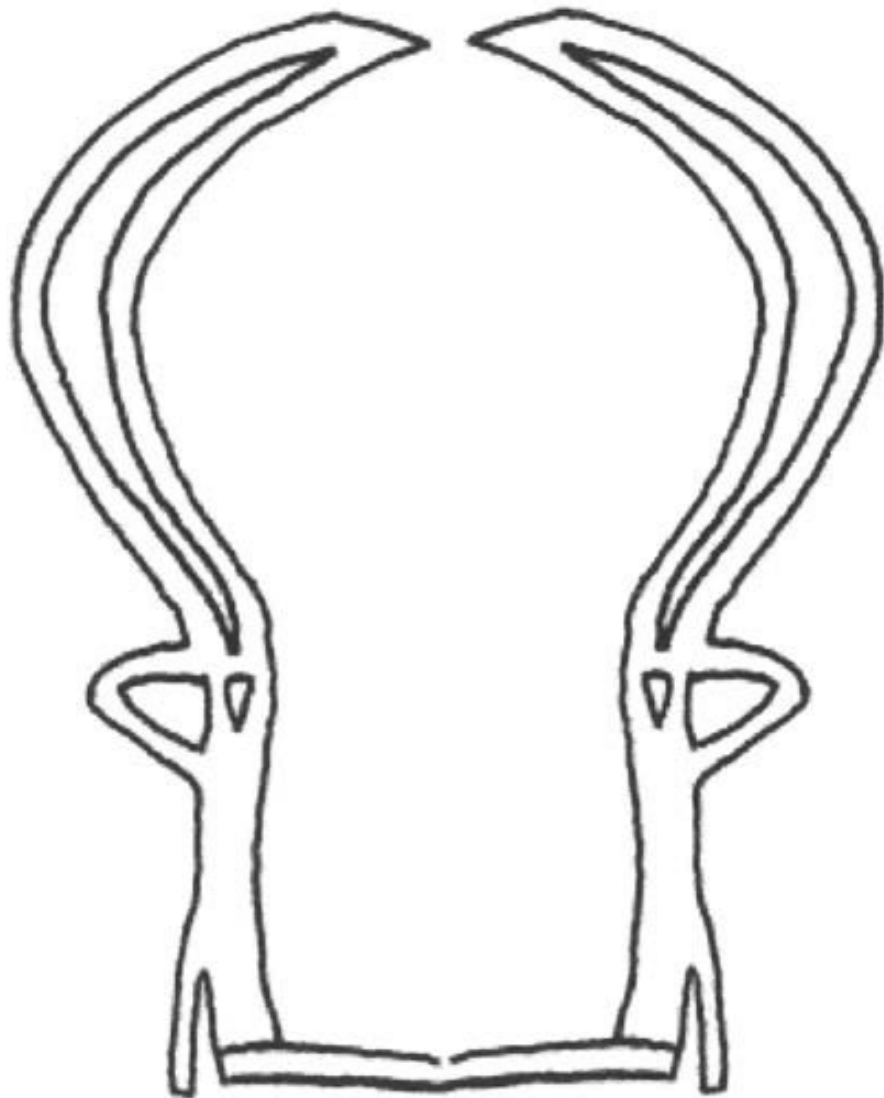


Figure E1.2b Bat Pot Mark from Tomb 16, cemetery HK6 reconstructed, likely Naqada II. Courtesy of Hierakonpolis Expedition.

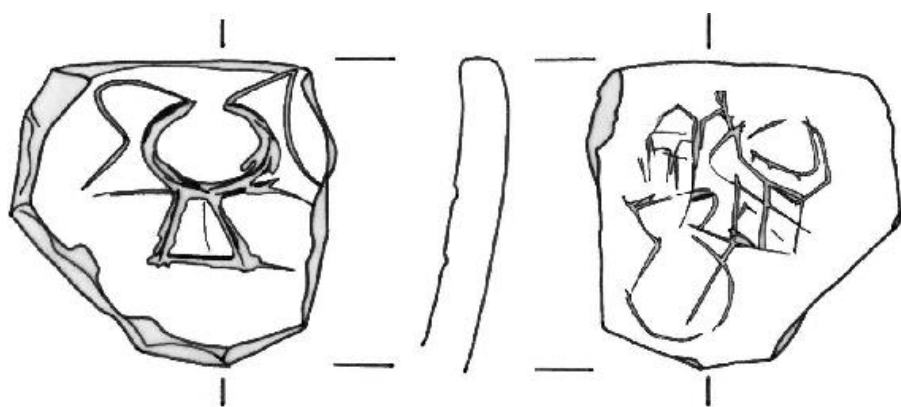


Figure E1.3 HK29A Ostrakon from Hierakonpolis with early cow/Bat image. Courtesy of Hierakonpolis Expedition.

A rock inscription from Gebel Tjauti found on the road between Abydos and Hierakonpolis, like the ostrakon from Hierakonpolis,¹⁸ presents a head with incurved horns but this time on a pole, a figure resembling strongly the bull head on poles seen on vessels found in Tomb U-j at Umm el-Qaab at Abydos.¹⁹ The exact meaning of the inscription has been under debate,²⁰ given its confused context, with so much else there, but there appears to be no question that the figure includes a bucranium on a pole.²¹ In this context, however, rather than identifying the head as Bat, R. F. Friedman and Hendrickx actually identify the figure as a bull,²² suggesting it might represent a standard, possibly in relation to the prisoner who precedes it, and over whom it may symbolize victory,²³ and more allegorically, “the triumph of order over chaos.” Jochem Kahl, on the other hand, has stated clearly that it represents Bat.²⁴ In response, R. F. Friedman and Hendrickx observe that despite the many depictions of the Bat symbol in the Predynastic and Early Dynastic Periods, none appears on a standard.²⁵

Some of this confusion, however, points to another debate over what exactly the head represents. While the heads on the top of the Narmer Palette are now understood

to be Bat, a goddess and thus female, we might question appropriately whether they are actually female. Indeed, Edouard Naville did exactly that in 1906 when he asserted that these figures were male.²⁶ More recently Whitney Davis has also questioned the gender, stating explicitly, “There is nothing to justify the anachronistic parallel or indeed the supposition that the bovids are female ...”²⁷ To complicate the situation even further, at least one scholar has suggested that what is present in the figure might rather be a ram, noting that the horns resemble those of a ram.²⁸ Neither exactly what the animal head represents—bovine or ram—nor its sex is a question easily resolved, as Christine Favard-Meeks and Youri Volokhine each state explicitly.²⁹

Another example of an apparent bovine head with stars appears on a sealing found in Grave U-210 during late twentieth-century work at Cemetery U at Abydos, Umm el-Qaab, which depicts a central field showing what Ulrich Hartung calls a “decorated Hathor head (or figure with upraised arms?) and a long-legged bird on a standard”³⁰ (see Figure E1.4). Here in the midst of a field of hills, perhaps an early example of the hill-country or foreign-land sign (N 25), and rows of semi-recumbent canids, appear both a triangular figure with two horn-like appendages and two additional appendages coming from its sides, each with a star on its end, along with a star on the peak set alongside a long-legged bird. In his discussion, Hartung draws a relationship between this seal and the Gerzean Palette,³¹ though questions arise about the bird. While he simply designated the bird “long-legged,”³² Jane Hill has suggested it is a falcon.³³ If this bird is understood to be a stork (an arguable assumption), comparable to that on the Hierakonpolis bowl, the two artifacts can be easily compared. Whether this is Bat or not is certainly

questionable, but the suggestion of a head of some kind related to stars remains without question. Furthermore, the seal presents a figure which is similar to those on the Gerzean Palette and the Hierakonpolis bowl, particularly the latter, though differently defined in outline from either of those.

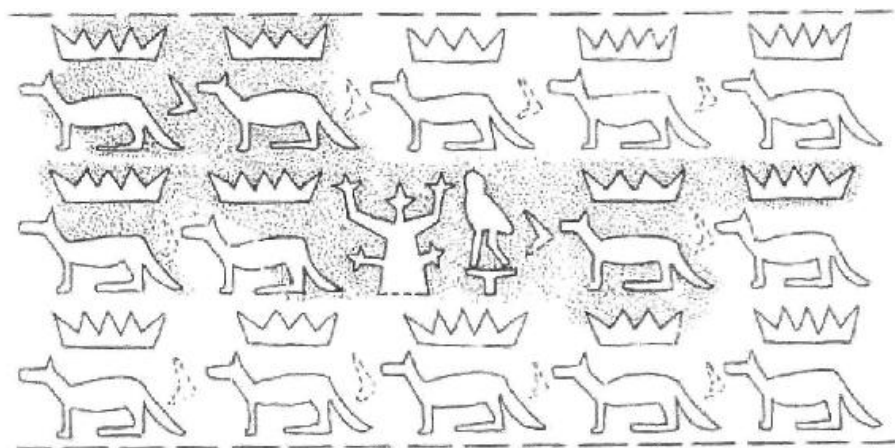


Figure E1.4 Sealing from Abydos grave U210 in the Umm el-Qaab cemetery, with Bat-type figure in the central part. © Ulrich Hartung.

As noted earlier, the stars on the ends of the horns, ear tips, and forehead of these various figures suggest a celestial relationship. In his 1912 discussion of the Gerzean Palette, Gerald E. Wainwright suggested that the stars there “may represent Hathor in an astronomical aspect,”³⁴ while other commentators have seen in it a heavenly figure related to the night sky. Interestingly, in his 1955 announcement of the bowl, Arkell actually asked that “any one [sic] with a knowledge of astronomy suggest an actual constellation,”³⁵ that might be represented in this figure. Perhaps in response, Fekri Hassan and Hill have each suggested the figure may represent Orion.³⁶ While there is certainly no conclusion about what constellation it might be, commentators quite regularly suggest that the presence of stars on these two artifacts point to the

“mistress of the stars,” *nbt sbꜣw*,³⁷ an epithet of Hathor in the Middle Egyptian tale of Sinuhe.³⁸ Nevertheless, as Volokhine has clearly stated, although the representation of the bovid/ram figure with stars “has been approached as a celestial image ... [a] representation that people have readily associated with Hathor, the relationship between this goddess and the head cannot be established for this period.”³⁹ Indeed, he continues that there is no contemporary way to determine a relation between historic developments and prehistoric iconography.⁴⁰

The very presence of the carefully and regularly placed stars on these three examples does, however, raise the question of their meaning. What do they signify such that even in different parts of Predynastic Egypt, this figure carries them, particularly since the star examples come from both Upper and Lower Egypt? One function of these stars may be understood, perhaps in this early period, as providing direction and guides for navigation for the knowledgeable, and as J. McKim Malville, Fred Wendorf, Ali A. Mazar, and Romauld Schild point out, “north directionality would have been important for nomadic groups navigating across the Sahara.”⁴¹ This note suggests that the origin of the head with stars might in some way be related to cattle, nomadic herders, and desert movement. Indeed, in a personal communication to me, James P. Lowdermilk suggested that the whole might represent the importance of the stars for the movement of cattle, a possibility given both the ancient Egyptians’ interest in and observation of the celestial realm and the timeless use of celestial bodies to guide navigation, generally on water but also possibly in the desert as well.⁴² And, as is shown in the next excursus, cattle played a very important role for people in the Nile Valley and especially in both the Eastern Sahara and Eastern Deserts, as evidenced in remains and

rock art,⁴³ notably with rock art evidence dating as far back as Pleistocene times (~19,000–18,000 cal yr. BP)⁴⁴ seen at Qurta in Upper Egypt, on the east bank of the Nile between Edfu and Aswan, where a panel appears showing many bovids⁴⁵ (see Figure E1.5). Arkell proposed, however, that “the resemblance of the new moon to a cow’s horn was the reason why a cow goddess was first associated with the sky,”⁴⁶ noting that a cow deity also appears in the Sinai as well as in ancient Mesopotamia,⁴⁷ questioning whether the figure on the Hierakonpolis bowl’s rim was “just the Cow Lady of Heaven,” occasionally seen with stars as in this example and also occasionally “with the moon between her horns ... and sometimes the sun” after asking if anyone might suggest a constellation with which this figure might be identified, as seen above.⁴⁸ No commentator notes, however, that apparently after Naqada IID1, or whenever the last artifact with stars occurs, Bat does not carry these stars. Indeed some other examples, some dating from Naqada IIA, another to Naqada IIB,⁴⁹ even predate those with stars.

The Narmer Palette is the artifact with which most Egyptologists probably initially encounter this symbol, one which appears on it eight times. In such a first encounter, there is a tendency to focus on the figures on the top of the both the recto and the verso of the palette, with much less attention—if any—paid to the four figures which appear on the king’s girdle, on the recto,⁵⁰ each of which presents a similar head. By at least the Fourth Dynasty, however, this figure with stylized horns appears as part of the insignia worn by various elite males, many of whom carried the title *ḥqꜣ bꜣt*. The figure commonly appeared on the chest of a man, set in straps crossing from his shoulders⁵¹ (see Figure E1.6). Scholars have spilled much ink on what this title means and who bore it at what time, but it does seem

that the title provided evidence of the bearer's relation to the king as a high functionary, and its use evolved over time.⁵² An additional note on the pendant *ḥqꜣ bꜣt*-figures observes that they not uncommonly appear related to the so-called “ankh-knot,”⁵³ as Fischer observes.⁵⁴

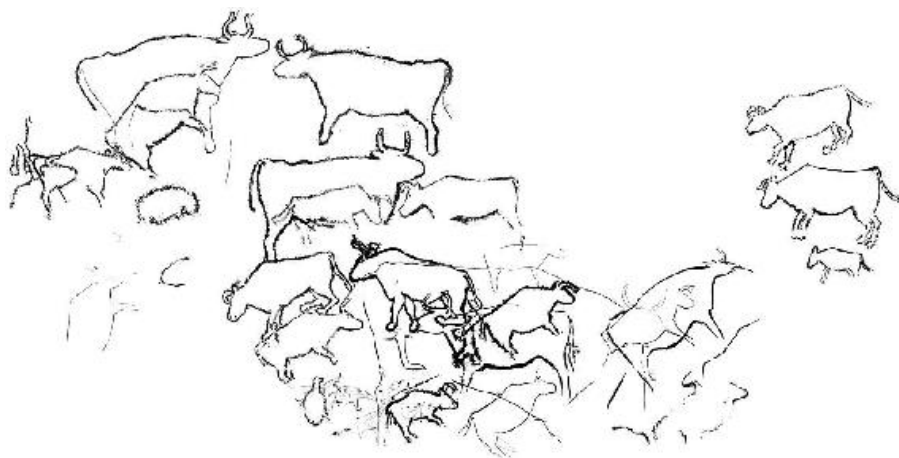
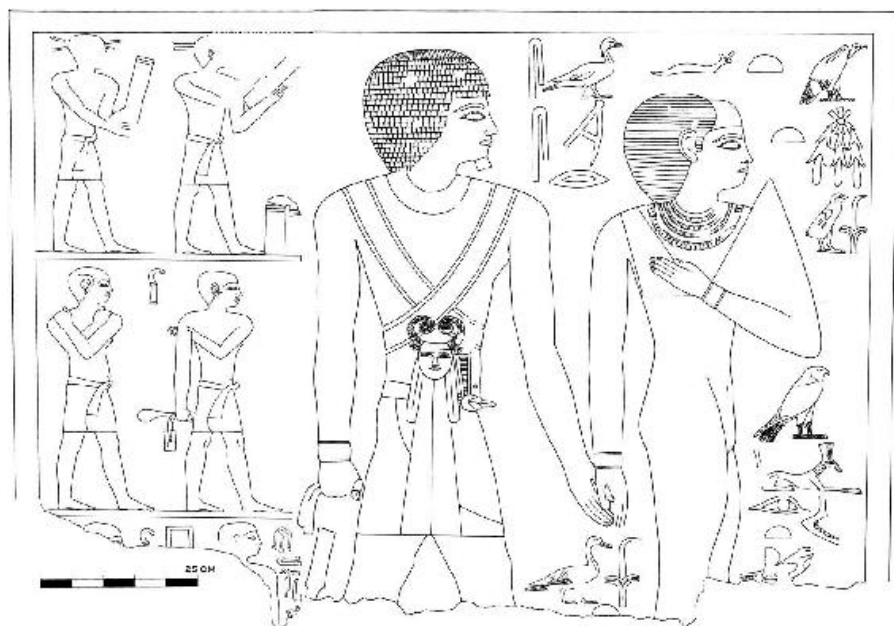


Figure E1.5 Many bovids (*Bos primigenius* or aurochs) from Qurta I, locality 1 (Q1.1.1) between Esna and Aswan (east side of the Nile). © Royal Museums of Art and History, Belgian Archaeological Mission to Qurta.

An aspect of the pendant figures that is little discussed is the triangular base on which the head sits, technically called a frustum.⁵⁵ In fact, Hendrickx and R. F. Friedman have noted that “the Bat emblem during the Late Predynastic–Early Dynastic period always has a broad triangular ‘neck.’”⁵⁶ They also observe that no exemplars of the figure on a standard are known prior to the Fourth Dynasty, even from the area of Bat’s Seventh Upper Egyptian nome, despite the many examples of standards.⁵⁷ Although one might argue with this statement on the basis of the bucranium on the pole from the Gebel Tjauti rock inscription, if one understands this latter as a bull⁵⁸ in accordance with R. F. Friedman and Hendrickx’s argument, there is no problem.⁵⁹ In fact, in discussing the HK 29A sherd noted above, a document depicting both the “Bat”

emblem and a bull's head on a pole (see Figure E1.3), Hendrickx and R. F. Friedman state that “the Hierakonpolis sherd is of importance as it shows that at the time it was made, the bull's head and the Bat emblem were clearly distinguished, occurring as they do on the same document.”⁶⁰ In his discussion of the sherd from Tomb 16, cemetery HK6, Hendrickx further states that this figure “provides us with a direct link to the dynastic style of representing Bat ... in fact the oldest for which exact parallels can be found in pharaonic iconography.”⁶¹



af. Khafkhufu I (G 7140), chapel relief, fragment, south

Figure E1.6 Khafkhufu I with $hq\text{ }b\text{ }t$ emblem on his chest, G 7140, figure 26. Figure © 2019 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Whether the head we call Bat is a that of a bull or a cow, the question of what it means for the king remains, beginning with its presence on the top of the Narmer Palette on either side of the serekh, as well as its presence on the king's girdle. Both Florence Dunn Friedman and Rolf Gundlach have suggested that what one has at the top of

this palette is the mistress of heaven protecting the king.⁶² Although F. D. Friedman refers to the head as Bat,⁶³ Gundlach merely notes that the heads correspond “to the later goddess Bat.”⁶⁴ A similar pendant hanging from a bull’s neck on an ornament or amulet dating to Early Dynastic Naga-ed-Der⁶⁵ presents the *bꜥt*-figure, related to what Cyril Aldred calls the Bat “aegis,”⁶⁶ an artifact that might serve, on close study, to help out with a number of the above questions. For example, in this figure we have both the bull and the cow head with the incurved horns, suggesting that the head should not be considered that of a ram. It might also suggest that the head with the incurved horns is indeed female and a complement to the strong bull, perhaps further affirming that the bucranium on the pole seen in the Gebel Tjauti inscription is indeed a bull.

At the point that Hathor appears in anthropomorphic form in the Menkaure triads, notably the one related to Diospolis Parva or Hu, the third figure beside the king and Hathor is, in fact, a female deity coifed with the Bat symbol, signifying a clear distinction between Bat and Hathor in the Fourth Dynasty, thus rendering moot any possibility of an earlier assimilation and strongly suggesting that the bovine head we understand as Bat’s symbol is truly a cow rather than a bull. Further confirming Bat’s continuing distinction in the late Old Kingdom is University College stela 14312, noted above, belonging to the nomarch of the Seventh Upper Egyptian nome *Hsw*⁶⁷ and dated by Fischer to no earlier than the late Old Kingdom.⁶⁸ It presents the wife of the nomarch as a woman who not only bears the name *Nfr-bꜥt* but who is *imy-r.t hnr Bꜥt*, Overseer of the Harem of Bat,⁶⁹ again definitively confirming the independent existence of Bat as a deity, while an early stela, Berlin 7765, belonged to an overlord of the Bat nome, *hry-tp n Bꜥt*, the Seventh Upper

Egyptian nome.⁷⁰

The early iconographic distinction between Bat and Hathor which is clear on these early artifacts is also evident when we compare the iconography of the two figures. Hathor, for example, when she carries horns, appears with the lyre-shaped horns and often the disk, rather than the incurved horns or the antennae-like “horns” so characteristic of the iconography related to Bat. This distinction continues into the early Middle Kingdom, which is evident in the shrine of Mentuhotep II at Dendera. There Hathor appears before the king carrying, and presumably shaking, a sistrum with a Bat head, called the *sš.t* or naos sistrum⁷¹ (see Figure 2.4). The presence of the sistrum in Hathor’s hand further suggests the independence of the two figures while at the same time recalling the ritual of the shaking of the papyrus, the *sš-w*⁷² *d*,⁷² representing Hathor’s emergence from the papyrus to welcome the deceased to the next world.⁷³ Indeed, the separation of the two figures remains visible into the Eighteenth Dynasty, as is clear in votive objects of Hathor, especially those from Hatshepsut’s Deir el-Bahri temple, but elsewhere as well.⁷⁴

Bat’s independence as pendant and sistrum, however, cannot obviate the fact that Hathor assumes Bat’s place in the Seventh Upper Egyptian nome as Mistress of the Mansion of the Sekhem no later than the time of Amenemhat III in the Middle Kingdom,⁷⁵ recalling a similar supplanting of the older crocodile deity ‘Ik(r) in the neighboring Sixth Upper Egyptian nome by Hathor as Mistress of Dendera no later than the Sixth Dynasty.⁷⁶

Although early textual supports for Bat are minimal, she does make one appearance in the Pyramid Texts in a text found in the pyramids of Pepi I, Merenre, and Pepi II that states, “I am Bat with her two faces,” *ink Bt hrwj.s snw* (PT

506, §1096b),⁷⁷ a passage whose meaning has been discussed and debated by numerous scholars. While Fischer suggests that the two-faced Bat fetish, reflecting the Janus-face of the Pyramid Text passage, becomes part of the cult of Hathor in the Middle Kingdom,⁷⁸ Favard-Meeks relates it to a Middle Kingdom pectoral, reportedly from Dashur,⁷⁹ that depicts Horus and Seth on either side of a *bꜥt*-emblem,⁸⁰ suggesting the whole recalls the queen's epithet *mꜥt Hr šꜥš*, "she who sees Horus and Seth."⁸¹ Favard-Meeks suggests the possibility that this Middle Kingdom pectoral carries an implication of Bat's two faces, thus representing this epithet, which first appears during the Fourth Dynasty,⁸² and symbolizes the unity of the Two Lands, that is, Egypt.⁸³

Thus in Bat, as generally discussed and understood, we minimally find a very early figure related to the king apparently as a deity; to officials adorned with a symbol known as the *hqꜥ bꜥt* and who stand in varying relationships to the king; as a nome deity in her own right on a standard; as part of a cultic object used throughout history, most especially related to Hathor; as one who makes a cameo appearance in the Pyramid Texts; as a figure who spans pretty much the length of Egyptian history, especially as the *hqꜥ bꜥt*; and as a deity who is clearly not static in her role while maintaining a form and role independent of Hathor.⁸⁴ Ultimately many questions remain for future consideration related to her roles and persistence, her iconography, her origins, and her silence, and of course the constant new discoveries from the Predynastic and Early Dynastic Periods that continue to occur will raise even more questions.⁸⁵

These early and continued appearances of both Hathor and Bat in bovine form, suggesting a brief foray into how cattle related to the ancient Egyptians prior to kingship,

will help with this discussion, particularly since very early evidence of cattle definitely points to their importance for the ancient Egyptians and supports the many references to bovines in Egyptian mythology and ideology.

Excursus 2: Cattle

The iconography of both Bat and Hathor involves bovine features, suggesting that a good understanding of the place of cattle within the culture of ancient Egypt¹ will help us to a greater understanding of Hathor and Bat and lead to suggestions about how and why they might be related to cattle. Such an investigation begins with looking at the origins, locations, and importance of cattle, followed by seeking to understand how their importance might have translated into bovine-related deities beginning at least with late prehistory.

The earliest evidence of cattle in Egypt comes from the desert areas, both iconographically and archaeologically.² Although the dating of rock art is problematic, cattle and their close relations, even their auroch ancestors, are commonly depicted in prehistoric rock paintings and carvings in both the Western Desert, often called the Egyptian or Eastern Sahara, and the Eastern Desert, that is, the desert lying between the Nile and the Red Sea (see Figure E1.5). While some progress has been made in dating in specific instances with explicit identifiable content,³ in general, accurate dating proves challenging due to degradation of the images through weathering and because their placement on rock means they are thus rarely accompanied by datable organic materials and related artifacts that might possibly provide secure dating.⁴ Some relatively new techniques such as optically stimulated luminescence (OSL) along with various other even more advanced techniques are proving useful for getting more secure and accurate dates.⁵

Significantly, although these deserts are now dry and do not support any significant mammalian life such as

humans and cattle, in the past this was not the case. In fact, as John Reader has described it, over the course of millennia, the Sahara has functioned something like a “pump”: people moved in and out of it as the environment was more or less habitable, coming into it during moist or humid periods and leaving it during arid times,⁶ as in fact occurred in the Eastern Desert as well. Reader’s vivid description finds its details in the extensive archaeological work by Fred Wendorf and his team during the last quarter of the twentieth century,⁷ along with some more recent work by numerous others.⁸

A good awareness and understanding of the vastly different environments between and within the deserts⁹ and an understanding of the environmental changes in both the Western Desert and Eastern Desert leads us to a better understanding of the presence and absence of cattle, which contributes to scholarship and hence understanding of the relationship of cattle and their presence in the deserts. The Western Desert is punctuated by various oases—notably the Kharga and Dakhleh oases and especially the Faiyum with its natural lake located west of the Nile—and playas too, that is, flat areas in the land which occasionally fill with water, each of which has had its own environment and history,¹⁰ while the Eastern Desert includes numerous wadis or watercourses that have water at some times and not at others. These features are critical because cattle must be watered daily in order to thrive, and watered every other day in order to simply survive.¹¹ Thus the presence of cattle in the different parts of the Sahara as well as the Eastern Desert was dependent on the availability of water in the oases and playas of the Western Desert,¹² and the wadis of the Eastern Desert.¹³ Of necessity, therefore, water along with available pasturage dictated the presence and movements of the pastoralists. With such

environmental variability, that questions continue to exist about when and where domesticated cattle first appeared in Egypt and their place of origin—or perhaps places of origin—is not surprising,¹⁴ and significant controversy surrounds each issue, along with questions about how to identify the remains of domesticated bovines as well as whether bovines arrived in Africa as part of a Neolithic package and whether agriculture preceded their arrival or not.

Cattle are now generally considered to have been the first domesticates in Africa, descended from wild populations of *Bos primigenius*, that is aurochs, in the Eastern Sahara around 10,000–8,000 BP.¹⁵ Furthermore it appears they were domesticated prior to the establishment of agriculture,¹⁶ for as the work of Fred Wendorf and his team, which began in the Nabta Playa–Kiseiba area of the Sahara Desert in the 1970s, has shown, the lack of regularity of sufficient water to make raising crops viable as contrasted to the relative ease of moving small groups of bovines made the latter a more productive mode of living than the former.¹⁷ In fact Wendorf and his team readily note the presence of cattle in the Nabta Playa–Bir Kiseiba area of the Western Desert “perhaps as early as 11,000 cal B.P.,”¹⁸ though the team notes that stone circles, cattle burials, and additional evidence of social complexity suggest a more certain date around “7500 cal BC.”¹⁹ They further state that in the late seventh millennium–early sixth millennium BCE evidence of an increase in the number of cattle becomes clear, presenting a more solid record of domestication through pastoralism.²⁰ Other scholars, dubious about the Wendorf team’s claim, present a variation of dates,²¹ while linguistic data based on “analysis of Nilo-Saharan root words” points to a pastoral way of life that “should be dated about 10,000 years ago,” and

additional words suggest cultivation about 9,000 years ago.²² Significantly, different sites in the same area show different dates for the initial presence of domestication.

Similarly controversial is the understanding of the origin of domesticated cattle, that is, taking a species of animal, in this case bovines, from its place in the natural environment, its normal living community, to reproduce and develop control over it.²³ An attendant question arises over how to identify animal remains as domestic.²⁴ A common understanding has postulated that cattle originated in Southwestern Asia and came to Egypt/North Africa as part of the Neolithic revolution, a kind of package that included domesticated plants and other animals such as goats and sheep. But some publications from the last quarter of the twentieth century about Nabta Playa suggest an African origin from the wild *Bos primigenius*.²⁵ Indeed the clear presence of auroch DNA in some of the cattle types in Africa suggests there is considerable validity to this idea.²⁶ In contrast, various early twenty-first-century analyses reaffirm that domesticated cattle originated in and came from the Levant, that is, Southwestern Asia.²⁷ Even more recently, new analytical tools suggest the sources of Egyptian cattle are mixed,²⁸ thus making clear that much work yet needs to be done on this topic.

The issue of when such domestication occurs centers on the presence of domesticated plants in relation to domesticated animals, given that the earliest certain appearance of cattle in the Eastern Sahara occurs at least by the late seventh or early sixth millennium BCE.²⁹ Although the dates have been called into question, there now exists a consensus that cattle are the earliest domesticates in Africa,³⁰ thus appearing prior to the development of agriculture which occurred no earlier than 6500 cal BP.³¹ As a result, at least one group of scholars has

argued that the so-called Neolithic package might never have come to Egypt, even while accepting that domesticated species of animals came from elsewhere. This given notes that domesticated cattle “did not form part of a uniform package of economic pursuits, ways of living and associated material culture,” thus emphasizing the importance of the variability present in Egyptian Neolithic records.³² Nevertheless, it seems clear that domesticated cattle appeared in Egypt at different times³³ and from different sources.

The importance of cattle to the people of the times surely lies initially in their food value. Early in their work, Wendorf’s team surmised that the ancient pastoralists used the cattle’s milk and blood as a source of protein, not their meat, referring to cattle as “a walking larder,”³⁴ though this concept has been disputed, at least for the Early Holocene,³⁵ that is, prior to 8175 BP.³⁶ Nevertheless, we have known for some time from archaeological evidence that milk and milk products formed part of the ancient Egyptian culture at least since the First Dynasty,³⁷ and more recent work has provided evidence of the residue of milk products in ancient artifacts dating to between 5200 and 3800 BCE,³⁸ supporting at least the milk part of the “larder” idea.³⁹ And realistically Veerle Linseele has noted that “more calories are usually obtained from milk than from meat,”⁴⁰ though in contrast, Douglas Brewer understands that the quality of milk production would have been very poor due to the kind of grass and feed available.⁴¹ What is generally understood, however, is that cattle did not provide much in the way of meat, for it appears that when they were killed, it occurred largely for celebratory purposes and rarely for food.⁴² Indeed, the work at Nabta Playa uncovered a ceremonial complex near which were found a number of cattle burials and offerings

that suggest the presence of a cattle cult with evidence dating it to 7500–7400 cal BP.⁴³ Furthermore, excavations have found cattle bones that were articulated, that is carefully placed, in contexts dating from around 6500 to 3000 cal BP at Nabta Playa,⁴⁴ sometimes under rock cairns. Such care suggests the people of Nabta related to their cattle on economic, symbolic, and/or emotional grounds.⁴⁵ Of particular interest is that these cattle remains came from mostly mature animals, and perhaps of even greater interest, Wendorf and Schild note that by the Late Neolithic, cattle ownership probably contributed to the “rank, power, and authority” of an individual, as is the case among modern African pastoralists.⁴⁶ They argue that such authority would have been needed in the construction of the megaliths found at Nabta, given that their these demanded organization and management skills along with a considerable investment of energy to get people to work on them for significant periods of time.⁴⁷ This need for leadership during the El Nabta/Al Jerar period, 8050–7300 cal BP, is clear, for example, in the deep wells the pastoralists dug to support their herds, as were found by Wendorf’s team at Nabta Playa and other locations. These wells allowed the pastoralists to remain in the desert during the drier winters.⁴⁸

While modern scientific analysis of archeological remains has led to some new understandings of the presence and movement of the pastoralists, their cattle, and other livestock in the Egyptian Sahara during prehistoric times, the presence of petroglyphs rather than material remains has suggested their presence in prehistory in the Eastern Desert of Upper Egypt between the Nile and the Red Sea.⁴⁹ As in the Egyptian Sahara, people moved in and out of the Eastern Desert according to the climate or the season, using the wadis of the Eastern

Desert as landmarks for travel. It is on the rocks of these wadis, that is the ravines, channels, or valleys in a desert area that are dry except when it rains, either locally or in adjacent hills or mountains and on the rocks of these hills and mountains, as well as around caves on which we find petroglyphs and rock paintings, though many more of the former and very few of the latter. Unfortunately actual excavations of the prehistoric sites of the Eastern Desert have been lacking until recently, a fact noted in the early 1990s by Béatrix Midant-Reyes and more recently by Pierre Vermeersch and his colleagues,⁵⁰ and so material remains beyond the petroglyphs are fairly limited at this time, and those that have been found, notably at Sodmein Cave, Wadi Bili, El Gouna, and Tree Shelter, show the presence of herders—but of ovicaprines (sheep or goats) rather than bovines. When bovine remains are present, they appear in very small numbers.⁵¹

Instead, the focus of research in the Eastern Desert has been on the recording of the rock art, searching for examples of rock carvings and petroglyphs, and then attempting to date them. For example, in the late 1980s, Susan and Donald Redford recorded ninety-two examples of petroglyphs and graffiti in the Wadi Abu Qwei, noting the depiction of animals, particularly large mammals as the “most common theme.”⁵² Somewhat later, Toby A. H. Wilkinson explored the Eastern Desert areas of Wadi Baramiya, Wadi Abu Wasil, Wadi Qash, Wadi Hammamat, Wadi Umm Salam, and Wadi al-Atwani, among others, observing that images “suggesting domination of the animal world (whether by tethering cattle or by hunting wild beasts) and boats” comprise the two major themes seen in the petroglyphs.⁵³ In fact, the work done in the last years of the twentieth century and early years of the twenty-first century, especially with the assistance of

modern technology such as reflective transformative imaging, has begun to open up many more of the petroglyphs present in the Eastern Desert as well as helping to date them.⁵⁴ All these recent explorations have found many petroglyphs involving cattle and boats, a rather curious fact given the limited physical evidence of cattle in this area and its distance from navigable water, but perhaps not surprising given the importance of both cattle and boats in Egyptian ideology.⁵⁵

Although it continues to be clear that the images of cattle herding in the Eastern and Sahara Deserts and the articulation of cattle bones in the early remains in the Sahara Desert, combined with an understanding of the needs of cattle for water and fodder,⁵⁶ point to the necessity of moving cattle regularly for support as noted, economic factors also played a part. In his recent study of the administration and thus the economy of the areas of Middle and Lower Egypt bordering the Western Desert, particularly around *Hwt jḥ(w)t*, Juan Carlos Moreno Garcia has provided ample evidence of pastoral activities, even to the extent of supplying other than local needs,⁵⁷ thus demonstrating that the need to move cattle safely was not only of concern to the pastoralists themselves but an important key to the economy. While such movement could and surely did occur during the day, movement at night, when it is cooler, and with stars to assist in navigation, might provide some clue to the association of stars with cattle images and thus argue for night mobility, with stars—perhaps via such special configurations such as that seen on Bat's head—serving as a kind of guide to the use of celestial navigation, that is, making use of the stars and their regular movements and formations to guide them.

This consideration makes the discovery of the megaliths

found by the Nabta Playa team of particular interest, not only for providing early evidence of the Egyptians' keen observation of the natural world about them but also of the skies in particular. In their discussion of these megaliths, Wendorf and J. McKim Malville describe the stars and their alignments as shown by these monuments,⁵⁸ suggesting that "[t]he astronomical traditions of Nabta may have been part of the inheritance of the nomadic cultures that was passed to populations of the Nile Valley."⁵⁹

While the Wendorf team did not apply the astronomical observations to daily life, in a recent discussion of long-distance travel and navigation in Egypt's Western Desert, Heiko Reimer suggested that the movement of the early people in the deserts made use of multiple possibilities and tools to enable them to travel successfully in such areas: knowledge of the landscape; sequences of landmarks; estimates of time, speed, distance, and direction; perception of dynamic natural phenomena such as the sun, stars, prevailing wind, and clouds; seasonal variations; and other less reliable types of phenomena such as humidity, sandstorms, and such, all skills that enabled people to travel without road markers, the kinds of knowledge learned through oral transmission, tales, and experience⁶⁰ but which at best leaves only ephemeral evidence in the archaeological record.

As a side note but perhaps of significance with relation to Hathor, the kind of navigation in the desert discussed by Reimer has a parallel in seafaring navigation, also practiced by the ancient Egyptians and similarly lacking any material artifact as evidence, for we know that the ancient Egyptians from earliest times ventured to places along the coast and likely out of sight of land. Thus David Fabre, in his study of seafaring in ancient Egypt, notes an art of navigation, something known to modern sailors as

well, that uses “dead reckoning,” observations of the sun by day, knowledge of regular wind and current patterns, and references to the stars, most notably the constellations by night by the helmsman (always male in ancient days).⁶¹ That the stars were important for both groups—navigators of the deserts and of the seas—was surely reflected in the divine world and its deities, initially Bat and then Hathor, each of them related to cattle and to movement.⁶²

Ultimately the early pastoralists’ close relationship with cattle appears in both the Egyptian Sahara and the Eastern Desert in prehistoric times, showing that even before the Egyptian Predynastic Period, cattle formed an important part of people’s lives. Furthermore, the sense of mutual connection and support between the pastoralists and their cattle as they moved might conceivably lead to the idea of mobility and thus guidance of a cattle spirit—like the Bat emblem⁶³—and since the mobility occurred generally within desert areas, which were foreign lands to the Nile dweller,⁶⁴ this sense and its link with cattle may well underlie the much later association of Hathor, like Bat, a cattle deity, with foreign areas. Furthermore, since Hathor is known in Byblos in the Old Kingdom,⁶⁵ perhaps this idea is not far-fetched. Given that some scholars have asserted that Hathor is related to the stars and navigation,⁶⁶ perhaps we can see here a connection between the two figures, Bat and Hathor. Finally, if true, the stars of the early artifacts of Bat might be related to the desert and the movement of cattle.

In the end, we can conclude—at least tentatively—that cattle received considerable veneration at least through the three millennia prior to the earliest clear record attesting to cattle from prehistoric Egypt and from the iconographic cattle-related figures identified as Bat, notably in their appearances on the Naqada II Palette from

Gerza (see Figure E1.1), the figure with cow's ears and horns on the Early Dynastic bowl from Hierakonpolis (see Figure 2.3), and the late Predynastic sealing from Tomb U210 at Abydos with its schematic figure with five projections, each culminating in a star (see Figure E1.4) that is easily compared with the other two artifacts. In addition, there are many more examples of Predynastic Bat emblems from different parts of Egypt, though lacking stars, than discussed here.⁶⁷ When added to the evidence of the ancient relationship between the cattle pastoralists of the Egyptian Sahara and the additional information about the domestication of cattle noted in linguistic clues found in root words appearing in the Proto-Northern Sudanic language family relating to cattle pastoralism about 10,000 years ago,⁶⁸ and the presence of similarly stylized heads on the tops of both the recto and obverse and on the king's skirt from the First Dynasty Narmer Palette, we find further confirmation of the importance of cattle in prehistoric and earliest Egypt.

In sum, the ancient Egyptian relationship with cattle appears to provide a solid link between Bat and Hathor and their relationship, details of which need considerable further study. While the independence of the two deities has only recently begun to become clear, the understanding that cattle serves as a binding feature also requires further research, as does clarity on the role of cattle in prehistoric Egypt.

Nut

The ancient Egyptian goddess Nut, the dominant goddess in the Pyramid Texts, the ancient mortuary texts from the royal pyramids of the later Old Kingdom, also functions as a cosmogonic deity as the sky, notably the night sky, often portrayed in New Kingdom times and later with stars on her naked body, arched over the earth, which itself is quite commonly represented by the earth god Geb (see Figure 3.1). Mythologically she is paired with Geb and with him procreates the gods Osiris, Isis, Seth, and Nephthys, as well as Horus in an alternative configuration. Geb and Nut themselves are the offspring of Shu, who is commonly understood as representing air and light, and his partner Tefnut, who represents moisture. These two, the initial offspring of the primordial deity Atum, were generated by him through spitting or masturbation as his first creation. The offspring of Geb and Nut—Osiris, Isis, Seth, and Nephthys—comprise the final four deities of the Ennead, the nine gods of the Lower, that is northern, Egyptian town of Heliopolis, referred to as *ḥwnw* in Egyptian, or “On” in the Bible (see Figure 3.2). This group appears as such in a Pyramid Text in an address to the god Atum in his beetle form (*ḥpr*):

You sneezed Shu and spat Tefnut...

O you Great Ennead which is in Heliopolis: Atum, Shu, Tefnut, Geb, Nut, Osiris, Isis, Seth, and Nephthys.

PT 600, §§1652c and 1655a–b1

Related to the genesis and power of Nut herself, another Pyramid Text provides a fine illustration as well as noting her major role in relation to the deceased king:

O Great One (Nut) who came into being in the sky [pt],
you have achieved power,
you have achieved strength,
and have filled every place with your beauty;
the entire land is yours.

Take possession of it, for you have enclosed the earth and all things
within your embrace,
and you have set this King as an Imperishable Star who is in you.

PT 432, §782a-d

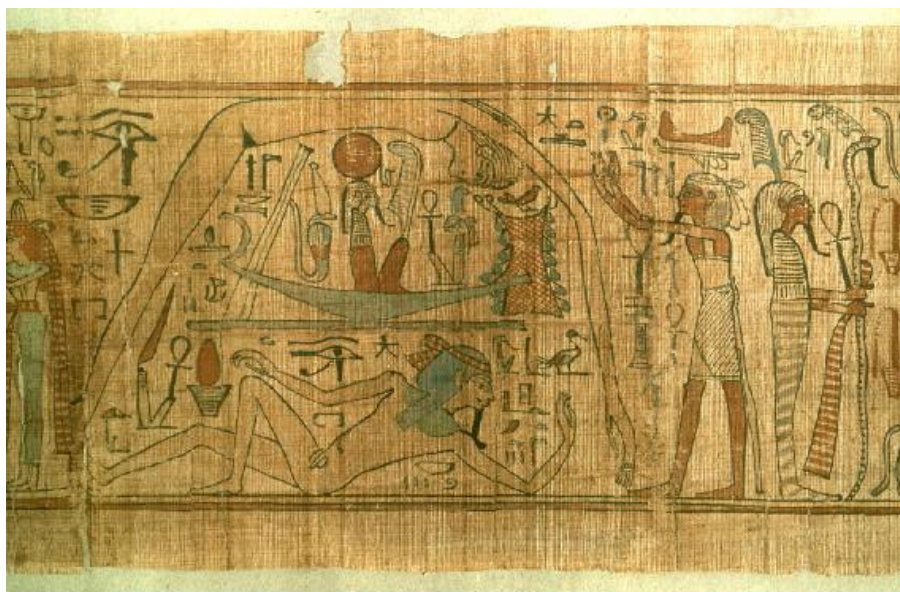


Figure 3.1 Ancient Egyptian cosmos, eleventh–tenth century BCE. A papyrus dating from the Twenty-First Dynasty. Nut (Heaven), stretches over the Earth, represented by her brother Geb, who lies below her. Nut’s toes are in the eastern horizon, and her fingertips at the western horizon. Photo by Art Media/Print Collector/Getty Images 463925085.

Atum

Shu

Tefnut

Geb

Nut

Osiris

Isis

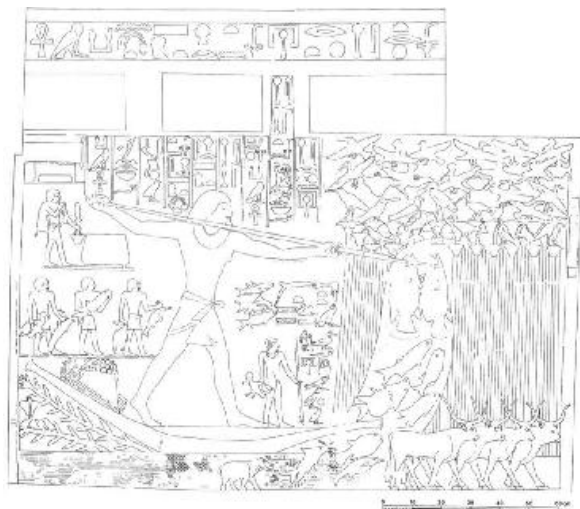
Seth

Nephthys

Horus

Figure 3.2 Heliopolitan Ennead with Horus as the Son of Osiris and Isis. © Susan Tower Hollis.

Although no certain reference to Nut appears prior to the earliest Pyramid Texts in the late Fifth Dynasty, a sense of her surely existed earlier as part of the ancient Egyptians' careful observation of the natural world around them—as evidenced in the carvings and paintings in elite tombs of the Old Kingdom (see Figure 3.3)—as well as their concern for appropriate tendance of the deceased and the achievement of a satisfactory afterlife through rituals and related actions. The existence of such rituals is evident from hints present in the elaborate care for the deceased, which appear even before the beginning of satisfactory mummification seen in elaborate tombs (including the pyramids), the rich and not-so-rich artifacts found with burials, and depictions on the walls of tombs of the preparations for burial and the carrying out of ritual.



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Fig. 3.1 Kaemankh chapel, north wall

Figure 3.3 Fifth Dynasty tomb of Kaemankh at Giza, north wall of the cult chamber, spearing fish; example of close observation of kinds of fish (and birds). © Naguib Kanawati.

Nut's activities

Knowledge of the basic activities of this mortuary goddess comes from artifacts, texts, and practices related to the dead rather than actual funeral and burial rituals.² Over the course of ancient Egyptian history, her role and activities deviate little from what we see in the Pyramid Texts through to the latest iterations of the Book of the Dead (in Egyptian, the Book of Going Forth by Day), along with Underworld Books and the later Mythological Papyri. In these texts, and later related artifacts, her role as a cosmic goddess comes through, but in specific relation to the deceased—the focus of all the texts in the pyramids—her role derives from the understanding that she is first of all a mother, with all the attributes and activities of a mother, and is always defined by her relation as mother of the deceased. As mother, the activities she engages in tend to cluster, though not cleanly, into five categories, the

ultimate goal of which is to enable the deceased to transform into an *akh*, *ꜥh*, a spirit form that transforms the deceased into a being able to live in the next world.³ These activities involve bearing/giving birth to the deceased; nurturing and raising the deceased; protecting the deceased; (re)assembling the deceased; and leading/guiding the deceased to the sky as an *ꜥh*.

The first category, giving birth to the deceased king in the next world as his mother, includes texts about her womb and pregnancy, with the resulting definition of her as the king's mother and he as her son. Examples of such texts include the following:

Nut became excited at meeting me, and the tassels of her slip that is under her dress received me,⁴ and they delivered themselves of me at birth, and what is bad has released me...

It is my rebirth today, you gods; I do not [now] know my first mother whom [once] I knew, it is Nut who has borne me with Osiris.

PT 565, §§1426a-1427b and 1428d-e

O Osiris NN,⁵ arise, lift yourself up! Your mother Nut has borne you, Geb has wiped your mouth for you...

PT 366, §626 a-b

O Nut, spread yourself over your son Osiris NN that you may conceal him from Seth;⁶ protect him, O Nut. Have you come that you may conceal your son? I have indeed come that I may protect this great one.

PT 427, §777a-c

As her son, Nut nurtures and raises the deceased king, embracing and enfolding him, and laying hold of him. These actions include cleansing, purification, wiping his mouth, nursing/suckling him, providing for him in general, carrying him, and keeping lack away, each of which can be understood as similar to the care a human mother provides for her new-born infant and babe, but in this context, these activities also involve the revivifying and resurrection of the deceased. The following examples

illustrate these concepts:

Your mother comes to you, Nut comes to you, the Great Protectress comes to you that she may cleanse you, O King; that she may protect you, O King; and that she may prevent you from lacking.

PT 451, §838 a–c

Nut the Great gives me her arms. She, the long-horned and pendulous of breast suckles me and does not wean me.

PT 548, §§1344a–b

O NN, someone comes, so you will not lack; your mother comes, so you will not lack; Nut, so you will not lack; the Great Protectress [šnm.t wr.t], so you will not lack; the Great Protectress [šnm.t wr.t] of the frightened, so you will not lack.

PT 447, §827a–c

In addition, she protects him by spreading herself over him and falling over him as the following example illustrates:

O King, your mother Nut spreads herself over you that she may conceal you from all things evil, for she has protected you from all things evil, and you are the greatest of her children.

PT 446, §825a–d

Part of her caring for the deceased involves gathering the deceased's bones into one place, essentially (re)assembling him or her, perhaps reflecting an ancient exposure of the deceased.

Be pure! Your mother Nut, the Great Protectress, purifies you, she protects you. “Take your head, gather your bones together,” says Geb. “The evil which was on this King is destroyed, the evil which was on him is brought to an end,” says Atum.

PT 452, §§842d–843b

Nut has fallen upon her son in you, defending you, joining you, assembling you, and raising you. You are the eldest among her children.

PT 593, §1629a–c

This concept of caring for the deceased is enhanced by

seeing her in her form as the sarcophagus, coffin, and tomb, as the next texts explain, essentially summing up these first four points:

She will protect you, she will prevent you from lacking, she will give you your head, she will reassemble your bones for you, she will join together your members for you, she will bring your heart into your body for you, so that you may be at the head of those who are at your feet and give orders to those who follow after you, that you may perpetuate your house after you, and prevent your children from mourning.

PT 447, §§827a-829c

She joins you and exempts your needing:

She places your head for you,
gathers your bones for you,
joins together your limbs for you,
gets your heart for you in your body.

PT 450, §835a-c

Nephthys has collected all your members for you in this her name of “Seshat, Lady of Builders.”

[She] has made them hale for you, you having been given to your mother Nut in her name of “Sarcophagus”⁷ [*Drwt*]

She has embraced you in her name of “Coffin” [*krsw*] and

You have been brought to her in her name of “Tomb” [*j^{rw}*].

PT 364, §616a-f



Figure 3.4 Nut on the inside lid of the coffin of Pa-di-Khonsu, Twenty-Second Dynasty. Photo by De Agostini/Getty Images 475597299.

Essentially the coffin keeps the deceased's bones together, even ensuring that his or her heart is included, and Nut's

importance as the coffin leads in later periods to her being depicted on and in the coffin (see Figure 3.4).

Finally we see her assisting the deceased to the sky through giving or extending her hand to the deceased, carrying, ferrying, and opening the way, leading him, and even serving as a ladder on which to climb to the sky. Once there, he will join the stars and travel alongside the sun (*rⁿ*) in the sun boat.

“How lovely to see!” say she, namely Isis. “How pleasing to behold!” says she, namely Nephthys, to my father, to the King, when he ascends to the sky among the stars, among the Imperishable Stars.

His power is on him, his terror is about him, his magic is at his feet, and he goes thereby to his mother Nut,

He ascends to her in this her name of “Ladder” [*m³kt*].

PT 474, §§939a–941b8

I have gone forth to Shu, I have climbed of the wing of the Evolver [*hprj*], it is Nut who takes my hand, it is Nut who makes a way for me...

PT 624, §§1757–58a

Nut has laid her hands on you, O Pepi Neferkare, even she whose hair is long and whose breasts hang down;

She carries you for herself to the sky [*pt*],

She cannot cast Pepi Neferkare down to earth.

She continuously gives birth to you, O Pepi Neferkare, like Orion,

She makes your abode at the head of the Conclaves.

PT 697, §§2171a–2172b

The overall effect of Nut’s activities on behalf of and for the deceased results in his resurrection and revivification, essentially a transformation of the deceased into an *akh*, that is, a transfigured spirit, and she bears him or her as an *akh* to the goal which he or she seeks: life in the Otherworld.

Ho, NN, you have left living, you have not left dying.

You have gone away to become an *akh* [*3h*] at the head of the *akhs* [*3hw*],

to take control of the living, to become a ba [*b3*]₉ and to be ba [*b3*],

And Nut's role to specifically *akhify*, *s^hh*, that is, to cause the deceased to become an *akh*, a transfigured spirit, appears in the next example:

You are the daughter, who took control in her mother, having appeared as a bee;¹⁰ may you *akhify* [*s^hh*] the King within yourself, and he will not die.

PT 431, §781a-b

Having made sure the deceased has become whole, Nut then makes very clear that the deceased king is actually identified with Osiris such that he, like Osiris, will live. Thus this next text focuses on the revival and living through the deceased king's identification with Osiris, the oldest of the offspring of Nut and Geb, and the symbol of renewable life through his relationship with the annual flood, the growth of "dead" seeds, and his renewal through his posthumously engendered son Horus, the living king. It further presents the deceased king to Nut as her son, revived through the Opening of the Mouth ritual which enlivens the mummy of the deceased, and affirms the deceased as whole, that is, with all his body parts.

LITANY OF IDENTIFICATION WITH OSIRIS:¹¹

Nut, this Osiris is your son whom you have made revive and live:
he will live and this Unis will live,
he will not die and this Unis will not die,
he will not perish and this Unis will not perish,
he will not be taken away and this Unis will not be taken away,
he will be taken away should this Unis be taken away...

Nut, this Osiris here is your son, of whom you said:

"Someone has been born to me," and you wiped his mouth for him
after his mouth had been parted [by] his beloved son Horus and his
limbs numbered by the gods:
he will live and this Unis will live,
he will not die and this Unis will not die,

he will not perish and this Unis will not perish,
he will not be taken away and this Unis will not be taken away,
he will be taken away should this Unis be taken away.

PT 219, §§171a–d and 179a–c

Nut then makes sure the deceased is linked to the primordial generator of the gods, Atum, a form of the sun god Re (*R[☉]*), the desired relationship which serves as a major body of texts in the pyramids. In action, the visual metaphor of going through the bones of the god Shu, the deity who separates the sky, Nut, from the earth, Geb (see Figure 3.5), speaks to the ascent of the deceased to Nut in her celestial form and, at the same time, her role as the mother from whom the deceased is born as an *akh*.

COMMENDATION TO THE SUN

You shall become/evolve with your father Atum, you shall be exalted with your father [Atum], you shall rise with your father Atum and release needs.

Head to [Nut], the Heliopolitan in the sedan chair [*rpwt*]; go forth and open your way through the bones of Shu, and the embrace of the interior of your mother Nut enfold you...

PT 222, §§207c–208b

Given Nut's role in assisting the deceased king to the sky, the following text, one among many similar texts, speaks to the deceased's departure from earth to the sky as its Lone Star:

COMMENDATION TO THE SKY

This Unis has come to you, O Nut, this Unis has come to you, O Nut,
having left his father the earth,
having left Horus behind him,
having grown wings as a falcon,
feathered as a hawk,
his *ba* having fetched him,
his magic having provided him.

[Unis], you shall part your place in the sky among the stars of the sky,
for you are the Lone Star¹² at Nut's shoulder.

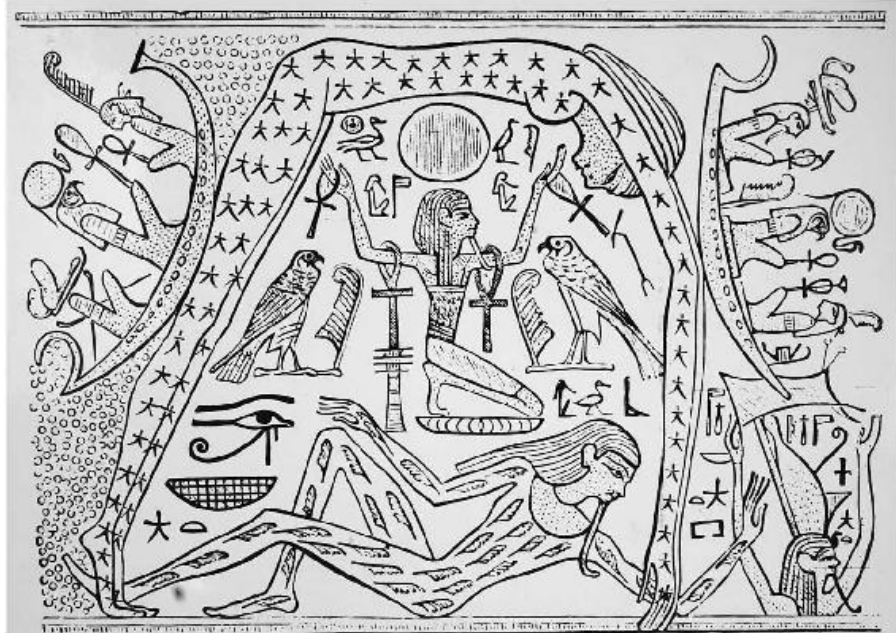


Figure 3.5 Nut, Geb, and Shu as creators illustrated in the Greenfield papyrus, Book of the Dead of Nestanebetisheru; sheet 87, late Twenty-Second/early Twenty-First Dynasty. Photo by Universal History Archive/UIG via Getty Images 997586070.

May you look upon Osiris's head as he governs the *akhs*, while you yourself stand far from him:
 you are not of them,
 you will not be of them.

PT 245, §§250a–251d

In sum, the very basics of Nut's activities and behavior throughout the Pyramid Texts as she carries out her role may vary—enclose, embrace, protect, spread over, bear, nurture, cleanse, getting him to the sky—but virtually all of them can be subsumed by the relationships noted in them: her relation to Osiris, including bearing him and caring for him as her son; her assistance in helping the deceased king join the sun; and her helping the king join the stars, even to becoming the One or Lone Star. Perhaps overall, the following text expresses very succinctly the relationship between the goddess and the deceased quite well and

embodies the fullness of Nut's roles—transforming the deceased, the speaker in the following text, into a living being: “O Nut, as you live, I live” (PT 445, §82e).

Nut's relation to Geb

The Heliopolitan Ennead clearly places Nut and Geb as members—the only two—of the same generation as the offspring of Shu and Tefnut.¹³ Several scholars have looked at Geb and Nut in the Pyramid Texts¹⁴ but generally with a focus on Geb alone, Nut appearing only as a companion,¹⁵ and commonly at the separation of heaven and earth, that is, of Nut and Geb.¹⁶ Although the title of Frank Miosi's article is “Some Aspects of Geb in the Pyramid Texts,” what he presents is actually the relations of Geb with other members of the Heliopolitan Ennead, including Nut. And as noted above, several of the Pyramid Texts present the entire Heliopolitan Ennead in the form of a kind of litany, notably in PT 219, §167a–174d in which the king as Osiris is introduced to each member of the Ennead; each of whom, including Nut, has caused him to live, while in PT 601, §1660a–1669d the king's name and his pyramid are asserted to endure even as the name of each member of the Ennead endures. In PT 600, §1655a–b, however, the members of the ennead are simply listed by name: Atum, Shu, Tefnut, Geb, Nut, Osiris, Isis, Seth, and Nephthys. Interestingly, nothing about any relationships among the members of the Ennead can be learned from these three presentations of the Heliopolitan Ennead. Thus in this corpus, we never find Geb described as Nut's brother or Nut as Geb's sister.¹⁷ Nut as the child of Shu and/or Tefnut, however, is explicit in a few texts. For example, the spell on the north side of Teti's sarcophagus¹⁸ notes that Nut loves her son Teti, the first king of the Sixth Dynasty, more than

her mother Tefnut (PT 7, §5d), while in another, one in a series of spells commending the king's spirit to Nut, Geb speaks to her, saying:

Nut, as you became effective in your mother Tefnut's belly before you were born, may you join Pepi, and he will not die.

PT 429, §779b

In yet another spell, Geb states that Nut is “above the land, but you [the deceased] have the head of your father Shu [under you] and have control of it [the land]” (PT 434, §784a). In addition, Miosi notes that Nut and Geb do function together or in parallel, as in the following example which outlines the positions of the two deities, Geb, identified with the green growth of the earth on which the king has trod in this world, and Nut's path in the sky, the goal of the king:

Teti has trod on the green plant under Geb's feet,
And he will trample Nut's path.

PT 332, §541d

While we have seen Nut very clearly as mother of the deceased king, Osiris, and just above we have text in which the deceased has the head of his father Shu under him, what is presented here is Nut and Geb separated by their father Shu,¹⁹ actually enabling life since Shu as air and light allows habitation to occur in the area between earth and sky, an image depicted visually on many papyri and elsewhere, quite notably during the Third Intermediate Period (see Figure 3.5).

Given that Geb is paired with Nut, as mother of Osiris and the deceased king, we should not be surprised to find Geb referred to as the king's father. For example, on the bottom of Teti's sarcophagus, Osiris is Nut's first-born, whose father Geb “is pleased with him” (PT3, §2b), while

the deceased is said to have come to his father Geb, from whom he asks support to go up to his mother Nut:

I have come to you, my father, I have come to you, O Geb; may you give me your hand, so that I may ascend to the sky [pt], to my mother Nut...

PT 485, §1030c-d

This kind of coordination of activities by these two deities, Geb and Nut as parents exhibiting parental behaviors, appears again and again in these texts, as in the following examples: Nut bore the king while Geb wiped his mouth (PT 366, §626b), while in another one Nut takes hold of the king while Geb receives his arm (PT 537, §1300b). In one text, the two deities appear in one phrase in which they are described simply as content (PT577, §1521a). In a joyful text, Geb laughs and Nut shouts as the king ascends (PT 511, §1149a-b). Then in one of the numerous identity spells—that is, spells in which the king or various of his parts are identified with one or another deity—the king's rear flanks are said to belong to Geb and Nut (PT 580, §1546c). A final paired text for discussion brings us back to the respective locations of the deities, this as an earthquake type text, of which there are several in the corpus of Pyramid Texts, as in PT 511, §1150a and in the following:

The sky [pt] has thundered,
the earth [t[†]] has quaked
[and the gods have grown excited before the birth of the god.
Oh], Pepi, Geb has given you up and Nut has accepted you.
Ascend to the sky [pt],
for the doors of the sky [pt] are opened for you,
the earth is hacked up for you, and
an offering is presented to you.

PT 716, §1-520

While various of these texts clearly present the two deities together, in no way do they indicate that there is a sexual

relationship between the two, although Miosi notes that in one text, Geb makes Nut “fruitful,” or “fertilizes” her, suggesting sexual relations (PT 433, §783a).²¹ In another text, which is overlooked by Miosi, Geb appears as the Bull of Nut, a text alluding to sexual intercourse, a concept known as Kamutef, Bull of his Mother (PT 260 §316a). However, as Daniel Arpagaus has observed, at least one text in the pyramids notes the inability of Nut to copulate (PT 539, §1321a).²² Ultimately, the Pyramid Texts provide little more than allusions and innuendos concerning any actual sexual relations between Geb and Nut.

Nut and Shu

In one of a series of spells recited by Geb,²³ the god addresses Nut suggesting the division between the earth and the sky, stating:

You are above the land,
but you have the head of your father Shu [under you]
and have control of it [the land],
for he has desired you and has placed himself under you and all
things.
You have taken to yourself every god who possesses his Sea-Mullet
bark,
that you might make them a star, lest they depart from you as stars.
Do not let this King be far from you in your name of “Sky”[Hrt].

PT 434, §784a–785d

The image of the king on his way to the sky appears in the following text as he pushes through the area between the earth and the sky, that is Shu:

I will smite away the arms of Shu which support Nut and I will thrust
my shoulder into that rampart on which you lean.

PT 255, §299a–b

Next, the deceased is commended to Nut, he being

identified with the sun at dawn and also as a star:

INVOKING THE SUN AT DAWN

The sky's face has been washed, the arc of the sky has grown bright.
The god has been given birth by the sky [pt] on the arms of Shu and
Tefnut,
on the arms of him who rises and becomes large.

PT 570, §1443a–1444a

Don't plow into the ground, Pepi's arms that bear Nut as [does] [Shu],
this Pepi's [metal] bones, his imperishable limbs. Pepi is a star that
strews the sky. You should ascend to this Pepi, god, that Pepi may be
tended. The sky will not be empty of this Pepi, nor will the earth be
empty of this Pepi forever.

PT 570, §1454a–1455c

Pepi is a star.

The Sun's protection is over Pepi, and the Sun's protection
cannot be severed from over Pepi.

Horus has put Pepi [on] his shoulders that he might allot Pepi
to Shu, the one with supporting arms under Nut.

PT 571, §1470b–1471b

O Shu, who raises Nut, raise the Eye of Horus to the sky [pt], to the stars
of the sky [pt]...

PT 689, §2091a–b

Nut's names and epithets

As the examples of Pyramid Texts related to Nut show, there are various names and epithets by which she is known, some very specifically stating “in your name of ...” (*m rn m X*). Determining how to understand these names and epithets, even to translate them by reading the hieroglyphs, can prove challenging, with disagreement evident among various scholars. Nevertheless, seeking their meaning should lead to greater knowledge about how those who handled the actual texts in the pyramids understood her.

In one of these, shetpet (*št-pt/štꜣ-pt*), which appears in

three separate utterances, Nut is said to have “spread herself over” the king “in her name of *št-pt*” (PT 356, §580c),²⁴ as can be imagined on seeing Nut on the inside of the upper lid of the coffin (see Figure 3.4). The term *št-pt* is linked quite regularly to the Wadi el-Natrun,²⁵ or a part of it, though only one text actually refers to a general location of the place itself when it concludes with the instructions to use “five pellets of Delta natron of Shetpet” (PT 35, §27e).²⁶ Given the early stage of writing within the Pyramid Texts, Tiziana Martinelli suggests that for *št*, we can recognize that in later texts *št-pt* can be *št-pt/štꜥ-pt*,²⁷ “secret of the sky/mysterious sky,” which could also signify “hidden,”²⁸ possibly the hidden sky, the undersky, a concept also hinted at by James P. Allen in his discussion of the cosmology of these texts.²⁹ Because Nut has no direct connection to the mummification process in which natron (a mineral salt) is used but a very clear connection to the sky, viewing Nut in her name of *št-pt/štꜥ-pt*, mysterious sky or hidden sky/undersky, makes great sense. However, and overlooked by any commentators known to me on these texts, at the time of the Pyramid Texts, omitting the weak consonant *ꜥ* was not uncommon,³⁰ so within the pyramids, *št-pt* could easily—and probably does—refer to *štꜥ-pt*, the secret of the sky, as Martinelli proposes. However, we must also consider seriously the role of natron in the mummification process. While there is now no evidence that shows Nut as actually involved in the process, the fact that mummification involved the use of dry natron, and that the preservation of the deceased’s body was essential for Nut’s activities, “shetpet” as natron surely carried a positive funerary meaning.

A second epithet that comes to the fore in Allen’s work is that of *hnmt wrt/šnmt wrt*,³¹ which he understands to mean “Great Sieve,” a phrase other translators have rendered as

“the Great Encloser” and “the Great Protector” in its place.³² Perhaps significantly, Nils Billing has observed that this epithet is the “most common epithet applied to Nut in the Pyramid Texts.”³³ Allen has explained that the idea suggests “the night sky, viewed as a structure through which the stars’ light shines,”³⁴ a concept which fits rather nicely with the many, many images from later times showing Nut’s body covered with stars (see Figure 3.6). However, looking at the collection of *hnmt wrt/šnmt wrt* texts, Allen does not explain his reasoning. Rather the kinds of activities in which Nut engages in the texts where *hnmt wrt/šnmt wrt* occur include the following: protecting, providing (being sure the deceased does not lack), cleansing, purifying, joining and assembling. The following examples include all of these concepts:

Your mother comes to you, Nut comes to you, the Great Sieve [*hnmt wrt*] comes to you that she may cleanse you, O King;
that she may protect you, O King;
and that she may prevent you from lacking.

PT 451, §838a-c

Your mother Nut the Great Sieve [*hnmt wrt*] purifies you and joins you.

PT 452, §842d

In fact, a sieve can provide protection and unification when upside down on something as well as dispersing or dispensing any water poured through it for cleansing,³⁵ both pointing to the varied applied aspects of this image and providing another image through which to understand Nut’s purifying and cleansing role.

Another interesting epithet, this one with two different hieroglyphic words, is “granary.” In one, Nut announces herself as the granary:

I am Nut, the granary [*msnttn*]. I will wipe the mouth of Osiris.

PT 435, §786a

In the second, the deceased addresses Nut as the granary:

Granary [*hftn.t*], the gods' mother, give your arm to me.

PT 563, §1419a



Figure 3.6 Nut's head and part of her body with stars from the ceiling of the burial chamber of Ramesses VI, showing part of the Book of Day and Book of Night, Valley of the Kings, KV 9, Twentieth Dynasty. She swallows the sun at night and bears it again in the morning. AKG Images/Erich Lessing AKG 44887.

Presumably, in each case since the hieroglyphic words are accompanied by the same determinative, a building with something like a mound lumped within it on the bottom, the whole might suggest a generative role, since granaries are places in which to store seed. Seed then would be represented by the small mound depicted on the base inside the structure.

Yet another and rather enigmatic epithet for Nut is Repet (*rpwt*) which appears in just two texts, in both cases

referring to a sedan chair, the implications of which have led to considerable scholarly discussion.³⁶

Your head belongs to the Heliopolitan [Nut]³⁷ of the sedan chair [*rpwt*].
PT 222, §207e

The second text clearly identifies the sedan chair as Nut:

Nut, you have allotted to the one whom you have borne, in your name of the sedan chair [*rpwt*] of Heliopolis.

PT 443, §823a–d

Save that *rpwt* certainly refers to a chair, we really do not understand the reference, aside from understanding a sedan chair as one in which a person may sit to be carried.

A final epithet from the Pyramid Texts refers to Nut as a “ladder” (*mꜣkt*), noted above as a means for the deceased to gain the sky:

“How lovely to see!” says she, namely Isis; “How pleasing to behold!” says she, namely Nephthys, to my father, to the King, when he ascends to the sky among the stars, among the Imperishable Stars. His power is on him, his terror is about him, his magic is at his feet, and he goes thereby to his mother Nut, he ascends to her in this her name of “Ladder” [*mꜣkt*].

PT 474, §§938–41b

Given Nut is located in the sky, as the text states, this epithet suggests, perhaps—and I am hypothesizing here from the perspective of a mother—the idea of the child climbing up the mother’s body, thus facilitating his or her ascension to the sky. Perhaps we might see it related to the text we have already seen in which the deceased is enjoined to ascend through the “bones of Shu” (*ksw šw*):

Go forth and open your way through the bones of Shu, that the inside of your mother Nut’s arms may embrace you.

PT 222, §208a–b

Here, of course, the imagery depicts the many examples from the Third Intermediate Period mythological papyri that show Nut, the sky, arched over Geb, the earth, separated by their father Shu, commonly shown as supporting Nut with his hands on her body (see Figures 3.1 and 3.5).

Manifestations

As is evident already from the textual examples above, Nut appears most often as an anthropomorphic figure in the Pyramid Texts but through written description—arms and hands in particular—rather than graphically. In later times, however, she does appear graphically in human form, both as sky and as a figure on the interior of the base of the coffin as well as on its lid, as in the Pyramid Text in which she is described as the coffin, sarcophagus, and tomb as noted in several of the accompanying figures (3.1, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6).

In a very few examples from the Pyramid Texts, she appears described as a cow³⁸ (see Figure 3.7), as in the following examples:

Nut has given me her arms, she, the long-horned and pendulous of breast suckles me and does not wean me.

PT 548, §1344a–b

Nut has laid her hands on you, O King, even she whose hair is long and whose breasts hang down; she carries you for herself to the sky [*pt*], she will never cast the King down to earth.

PT 697, §§2171a–b



Figure 3.7 Nut as Celestial Cow from Seti I's Tomb, KV17. UNESCO World Heritage List, 1979. Photo by Getty Images 479647201, De Agostini Picture Library.

In another text, a unique one to date, she appears as a vulture, an uncommon image for the sky in these early materials: “Behold, the vulture [*nrt*]³⁹ has fallen upon her son” (PT 590, §1611b). In this case the Egyptian word *nrt* is clearly determined by a vulture, suggesting that *nrt* may be another designation for Nut. Notable, however, is the fact that the vulture is the most common determinative for *mwt*, the Egyptian word for mother, thus fitting well with Nut as mother for the deceased king.

Cult

A feature of major deities in any culture lies in the presence of cult places, at least shrines, dedicated to that particular deity and served by a cadre of priests and priestesses attending that deity. Evidence of cult places for Nut, however, are rare to absent at this time. The one

possible exception comes from a title of Pepi-Ankh, the Middle (*ppjj-nḥ-hrj-b*)’s Sixth Dynasty tomb at Meir, a title which various scholars have read as “Priest of Nut,” *ḥm ntr Nwt*.⁴⁰ Interestingly, the actual hieroglyphs read “Priest of Nunet/Nenut,” *ḥm ntr Nwnwt/Nnwt*, with a male bearded deity as the ideogram,⁴¹ hardly what we would expect for Nut. To conclude that a cult place for Nut existed at Meir in Middle Egypt is therefore highly questionable.

Nevertheless, several examples within the Pyramid Texts themselves suggest the possibility that she did indeed have cult places,⁴² notably texts which include the following within them: *ḥwt-hrt*, *ḥwt-šn.t*, and *njwt*, the first two using the Egyptian word for house or temple and the third the word for town, none of which has been identified through archaeological or other means to date. However, a close examination of each example suggests possible alternative understandings for the presumed “location.” For example, a Pyramid Text which appears on the interior bottom of Teti’s sarcophagus reads as follows:

Recitation by Nut the great who dwells in the Lower Mansion [*ḥwt-hrt*]...
PT 3, §2a

Here the focus is on the “Lower Mansion” (*ḥwt-hrt*), that is, the physical space in which the mummy rests, thus making it apparent that *ḥwt-hrt* refers to the lower house, the body or box of the sarcophagus.⁴³ This relates easily to Nut’s close association, even identification, with the coffin and sarcophagus, seen previously in PT 364, §616a–f. Unfortunately, it provides no sense of geography or of a possible cult place.

Similarly, the term “Mansion of Shenit” (*ḥwt šn.t*) exemplifies another apparent location but with no clear geographic reference:

The other example using the term $\check{s}n^{\check{i}}.t$ in relation to Nut in the Pyramid Texts appears on the interior west wall of Teti's sarcophagus and appears to suggest a specific geographic location:

As the name of Nut is firm in the Mansion/Enclosure of Shenit in Heliopolis,⁴⁴ the name of this Pepi Neferkare shall be firm, and this his pyramid shall be firm, and this his work shall be firm likewise, for the course of eternity.

PT 601, §1664a–d

It is unclear that such a place actually existed in Heliopolis, however, and curiously neither of the major English translators suggests a meaning for $\check{s}n^{\check{i}}.t$, aside from its location in Heliopolis.⁴⁵ The driving concept here appears to be the word $\check{s}n^{\check{i}}$, a verb meaning “to enclose, surround,” leading one to understand the phrase $hw.t-\check{s}n^{\check{i}}.t$ as designating the surrounding or enclosing house. This idea again certainly suggests the coffin, or perhaps even the burial chamber, either of which can be supported by the location of the phrase on Teti's sarcophagus.⁴⁶ One might even extend the image to include the entire tomb, again reminding us of PT 364, §616a–f with its description of Nut as coffin, sarcophagus, and tomb.

From another perspective, Martinelli suggests that the following text, which includes the word “town,” *njwt*, refers to a holy place, a location where Nut touches the earth, relating it to the Mansion of Shenit ($hw.t-\check{s}n^{\check{i}}.t$) which Martinelli considers to be a chapel in the temple at Heliopolis. However, she does not identify what temple this might be. Thus this reference to Nut in her name of “town” (*njwt*)⁴⁷ may suggest a chapel at best:

So, return, return, Nut, for Geb has commanded that you return in your

While Martinelli's idea is interesting, sadly it lacks any concrete support at this time. An alternative is to translate the word *njwt*, seen previously in PT 222, §207e as the "one in On" or the "Heliopolitan one," both feminine and each indicating Nut, thus reading the text as:

So, return, return, Nut, for Geb has commanded that you return in your identity of the Heliopolitan.

PT 587, §1596b

More recently, Billing, a prolific commentator on Nut,⁴⁸ has remarked that while the most frequently noted mansion of Nut is the Mansion of Shenit (*hw.t-šn't*), nevertheless, "[t]he status of this presumed chapel is, however, uncertain."⁴⁹ Going even further, Leonard Lesko suggests there is no cult center for Nut, and its lack results "from her originally chthonic rather than anthropomorphic nature,"⁵⁰ though he does not explain further what this chthonic nature might be. Nevertheless, that Nut is related to Heliopolis brooks no question since she is a key member of the Ennead, the collection of deities clearly related to that area.⁵¹ This interesting idea might suggest that her relationship to the mortuary world preceded her relation to the sky, given her full-blown figure in the time of the Pyramid Texts in the late Fifth Dynasty, clearly something to explore.

Nut's backstory: origins of a deity

Until now, this discussion has focused on Nut as she appears in the mortuary and mythological concepts as expressed mainly in the Pyramid Texts from the late Fifth Dynasty up through the end of the Sixth Dynasty, but when

she appears in the texts in Unis's pyramid, she is already a fully formed and active deity⁵² in a role she maintains throughout Egyptian history. She is clearly in the sky and related to both the astral and solar realms as seen in my discussions of Bat with regard to the movement of cattle and the presence of stars on the horns, ears, and head of the bovine figure called Bat. Similarly, Nut derives her nature from the close observation of the sky as a parallel to the Egyptians' close observation of the earthly realm evident in their graphic depictions in nobles' tombs from the time of the Fourth Dynasty (see Figure 3.3). Very specifically, in the words of the editors of *Behind the Scenes: Daily Life in Old Kingdom Egypt*, "[t]he Egyptians were keen observers of their natural world and portrayed their physical environment with great accuracy, providing a realistic picture of the Nile Valley during the Old Kingdom."⁵³

This careful observation of the natural world certainly extended to the sky, including both the sun and the moon, as well as the stars, evidence of their interest appearing in the names of star groups present in the Pyramid Texts, as well as stars themselves, for example the star Sothis/Sirius and the constellation of Orion.⁵⁴ Therefore a careful consideration of aspects of the stellar and solar realms, already noted in relation to the king's aspirations to the sky, should provide possible clues to Nut's backstory, that is, her beginnings as part of the Egyptian mortuary and mythological realms. Indeed, in the Pyramid Texts seen so far, we have found many texts discussing the deceased king's ascent to and relation to the sky [pt]. Thus, a number of scholars have sought to elucidate Nut's backstory or origins by means of astronomy.

Using astronomy for this purpose, Virginia Davis has suggested that the Milky Way represents Nut, notably

because the sun crosses this body once a year from north to south and a half year later in the reverse—south to north—and she views the Milky Way as the body that separates the southern and northern skies mentioned in the Pyramid Texts. She is quite specific: the northern and southern skies appear in these texts, but never eastern or western skies, while both the eastern and western horizons appear in the Pyramid Texts, the areas where the sun appears and disappears daily.⁵⁵ Similarly, but using different evidence, Arielle Kozloff identifies Nut as a “specific astral structure,” postulating that Nut was indeed the Milky Way. Kozloff derives her conclusion in part from a New Kingdom spoon type referred to as the “swimming girl,” a spoon formed in the shape of a nubile young female holding a lotus flower, goose, or duck. When this figure holds a goose, Kozloff sees it as representing Nut as the wife of Geb, for Geb is commonly viewed as a goose, while the duck is viewed as the son of Geb. The lotus also suggests Nut, who swallows the sun as an act of safety during the night and rebirths it in the morning, even as the lotus reopens daily with the appearance of the sun.⁵⁶ More recently, Amanda-Alice Maravelia looked at depictions of Nut in three royal tombs of the New Kingdom, again seeing the goddess as the personification of the Milky Way. She very specifically related Nut, as did Davis, to the solar god Re, R^{e} , and noted, as did Kozloff, that Nut swallowed the sun every evening and bore it every morning. Nut thus functioned regularly to overcome the chaotic forces of the night.⁵⁷

Finally, among those with a special interest in the skies and its stars is Ronald A. Wells, an astronomer by profession with a strong interest in ancient astronomy, particularly as related to ancient Egypt.⁵⁸ In fact, he has carried out virtual observations of the ancient sky via

computer to observe the night sky in 3500 BCE, leading him to suggest that the Egyptians of that time saw in the *msk.t-shd.w*, the Milky Way,⁵⁹ a female form with the constellation Gemini as the head and that of Cygnus, the swan, often called the northern cross, representing the juncture of the female's legs⁶⁰ (see Figure 3.8). His simulations also show that at the time of the spring equinox, the "mouth" of the figure is facing up and the ecliptic, that is the sun's path, moves through it as if to be swallowed by it.⁶¹ Some 272 days later, the length of a typical human pregnancy,⁶² near the time of the winter solstice, Cygnus is present and the sun returns.⁶³ This idea suggests a solar and an annual role for this deity, unlike—as Wells notes—the common idea that the sun's travels through Nut's body simply represents the sun's regular nightly journey.⁶⁴ It does not seem to me—or to Wells, in fact—that it is necessary to choose between these two ideas; rather, one can embrace both the nightly journey and the annual journey. Certainly, the idea of the sun's daily circuit can fit with the return of the sun from the south around the time of the winter solstice, leading to the now lengthening of the daylight hours, while at the same time the reception of the sun in the west and its rebirth at dawn need not be excluded. Indeed, the many iconographic representations suggest that the idea of the sun's nightly journey need not be excluded.

The suggestion that Nut's origins lie in the ancient Egyptians' observation of the night and day sky does not, however, address the source of her name, generally written with one *nw-jar* and a complementary "t," but in a few instances occurring with two *nw-jars*.⁶⁵ It never occurs, however, with three *nw-jars*, at least in the known Pyramid Texts in which three *nw-jars* are used only in designations of *nw*, *nu*, the abyss.⁶⁶ In his consideration of her name, in

“Reading a Pyramid,” Allen suggests that the sarcophagus in Unis’s pyramid is actually Nut “not in [the] role of [the] sky but rather in what seems to be the character original to her name: the oval [*nwt*] enclosing the body of her son Osiris.”⁶⁷ In his earlier discussion of this idea, Allen notes that Nut might even have been “the sky conceived as a cosmic amniotic sac.”⁶⁸ Indeed an occurrence of her name in Unis’s burial chamber is written with a round sign, a circle (v 219, §179a),⁶⁹ rather than the usual *nw-jar*, and was originally translated as “city” (*n^fwt*).⁷⁰ Allen, however, treats it as referring to Nut. He also notes a few other appearances of her name written with a simple circle or an oval rather than the customary *nw-jar*.⁷¹

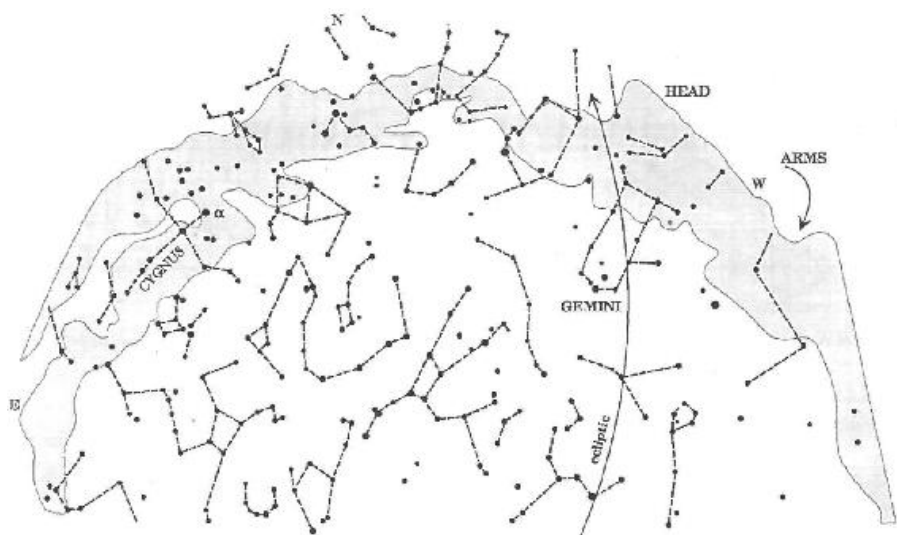


Figure 3.8 Nut seen in the Milky Way in the northern latitudes with Gemini and Cygnus and suggestions of arms and head. © Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved.

The possible association of both the circle and the oval with the coffin and sarcophagus recalls the various Pyramid Texts which speak to Nut’s gathering deceased members,⁷² as well as those in which she embraces him.⁷³ These images fit well with the function of Nut expressed in

the well-known Pyramid Text 364, §616a–f, discussed previously, in which the goddess is described as the coffin, the sarcophagus, and the tomb. Furthermore, Allen suggests that given “Nut’s consistent association with the sky and its waters, it is possible that her specific function originally may have been that of the sky conceived as a cosmic amniotic sac, from which the king, like the sun, was born each day,”⁷⁴ a suggestion that fits with the idea that the king was associated with the sun in his afterlife.

What is missing from this discussion so far is I. E. S. Edwards’ observation that two kings in the Fourth Dynasty—the unknown owner of the large unfinished pyramid at Zawiyet el Aryan⁷⁵ and Djedefre’s pyramid at Abu Roash—each had an oval sarcophagus.⁷⁶ Clearly dating from before the Pyramid Texts, this evidence might well support Nut as the sarcophagus in an oval form, thus suggesting a pre-pyramid tradition for Pyramid Text 364 which identifies Nut as the sarcophagus. Although these are the only two known oval sarcophagi, this is not problematic, given that the word *šnⁱ*, “to surround, to enclose,” provides the appropriate imagery. On consideration of the mummy in an oval coffin, it is useful to recall that the earliest burials known from ancient Egypt commonly present the corpse in contracted form, a fetal shape, in shallow oval pits,⁷⁷ a type of early interment common across many cultures. Thus, the presence of the oval ideogram might represent the use of an old copy, where the oval shape of at least one or possibly two Fourth Dynasty sarcophagi perhaps represent descendants of the prehistoric contracted burials. Nevertheless, very early the Egyptians moved to rectangular coffins and much later to anthropoid versions, with only these Fourth Dynasty figures possibly known to own oval coffins. Still significant for this discussion is that they are oval, royal, and date from before the Pyramid

Texts, suggesting a possible relation to Nut in the early Fourth Dynasty as well as to the circle determining her name is several Pyramid Texts.

This understanding then returns this discussion to the idea found in other Pyramid Texts that Nut is the sarcophagus and/or the burial chamber. A review of the locations of the extraordinarily large number of identifiable and separate references to Nut shows that about half of them appear within the burial chamber itself, the location of the sarcophagus and the area that may be understood to correspond to the Duat—that is, the underworld or netherworld.⁷⁸ In fact, Allen suggests that the texts in Unis's pyramid, the smallest and most compact of the king's pyramids, follow the king's journey from west to east, that is, from the setting of the sun with whom he is identified as well as with Osiris, to the east with the rising of the sun, identifying the sarcophagus actually as Nut, as noted earlier but here not in role of sky, but rather in what seems to be the character original to her name: the oval (*nwt*) enclosing the body of her son Osiris.⁷⁹

In sum, Nut clearly has antecedents prior to her ubiquitous appearance in the Pyramid Texts. I have argued that these antecedents lie in the natural world and quite likely also reflect early burial practices and rituals. While much of the thinking here is somewhat hypothetical and we surely do not know when the coffin or sarcophagus became identified with Nut or how the early burials in contracted form might have evolved into the idea of an amniotic sac that represented Nut, if in fact it did, or indeed quite a bit more about her, what we do know is that her presence is a key figure related to both the sky and the coffin/sarcophagus from the Old Kingdom through the end of the pharaonic period.

Isis and Nephthys

As we move to our last two goddesses, Isis and Nephthys, we are encountering faint remnants of the earliest mortuary rituals in care for the deceased: a pair of women preparing the dead for burial so common in traditional cultures from all times and places as is seen so often in tomb carvings and paintings (see Figure 4.1). At the same time, the first secure appearance of these goddesses is the latest of those deities under consideration, occurring near the end of the Fifth Dynasty at best. They are also the first of our goddesses who are firmly rooted in a mythic narrative in early Egyptian history, although during this time, we encounter mythic references only in bits and pieces. Indeed, the relevant mythic narrative was not fully committed to written form until the second century CE in Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride*, a narrative that after telling of the birth of the gods, focuses on Isis and Osiris with little about Nephthys.¹ The story Plutarch tells, however, is important, for in it, Seth plotted against his brother Osiris, building a beautiful chest specifically to fit him and him only, and then hosting a party where he, Seth, offered it to whomever at the party it fit. Of course it fit only Osiris, and when he, the last to try it, lay down in it, the cover was shut and sealed over him. The chest was then put on the river to go to the sea, finally landing in Byblos. There it was incorporated into a temple pillar where, in time, after a long search, Isis found it and took it back to Egypt.

Another part of this narrative—several distinct stories

appear in it—includes the dismemberment of Osiris's body and the scattering of its parts to different sections of the land where they must be found and then brought back to make the corpse whole again.

Although the focus of Plutarch's story is on Isis, the general concept of searching, finding, bringing back, and caring for the deceased pervades the activities of both Isis and Nephthys in the Pyramid Texts, our major source of information about these sister goddesses through the end of the Old Kingdom. The two functioned as a pair to accomplish the searching, finding, caring for, protecting, nurturing, and more of the deceased, often referred to as Osiris, although occasionally related to other deities. Nephthys appears to have been relegated to the shadows to the degree that she has actually been termed the "goddess in the shadow,"² while Isis became so well known in the world of the Greeks and Romans that R. E. Witt, a noted scholar of that period, devoted an entire book to her, writing:

There, in the beginning was Isis. Oldest of the old, she was the goddess from whom all Becoming arose. She was the great Lady—Mistress of the Two Lands of Egypt, Mistress of Shelter, Mistress of Heaven, Mistress of the House of Life, Mistress of the Word of God. She was the Unique. In all her great and wonderful works she was a wiser magician and more excellent than any other god.³

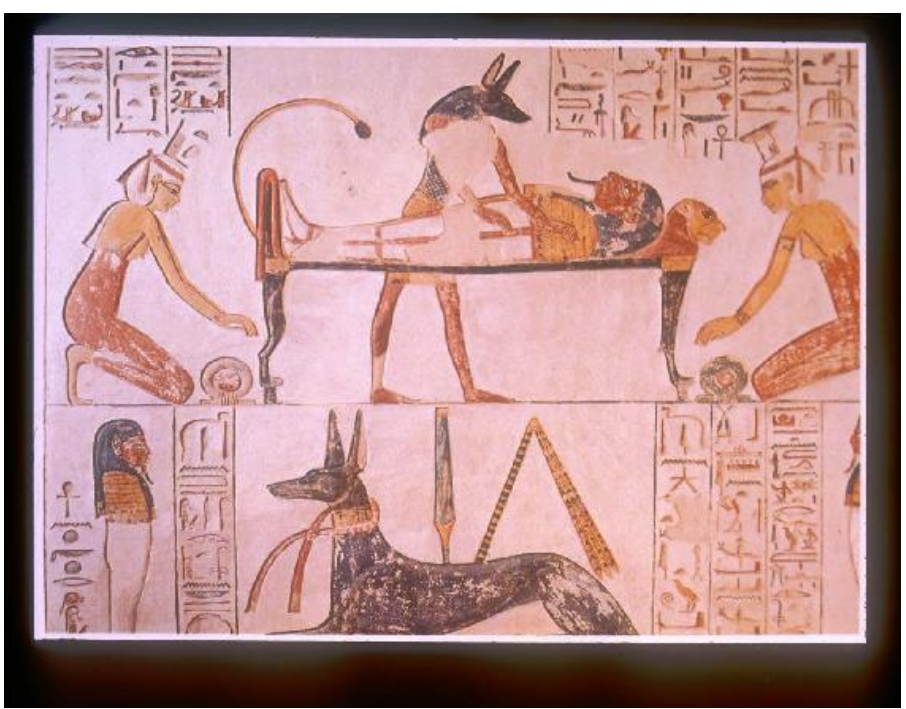


Figure 4.1 Isis at the foot and Nephthys at the head with Anubis and bier from Siptah's tomb, KV 47, caring for the deceased. TMP Photographer Francis J. Dzikowski, Francis Dzikowski © Theban Mapping Project.

However, when Isis first appeared in a secure context, that is, where it was absolutely clear that the reference is to the goddess, near the end of the Fifth Dynasty in the Pyramid Texts, she was paired with her sister Nephthys. They essentially worked as partners from their first appearance until very late in Egyptian history, though each also engaged in a few limited activities not closely shared with the other. Indeed it is relatively late in history that Isis assumed a role so entirely separate from Nephthys that a scholar such as Witt might write as he did. Because the separate activities of these divine sisters were so limited during the period under consideration, this discussion will begin by looking at the two as a pair, first about the activities in which they worked together, activities that essentially involved caring for the deceased commonly in

material and maternal type behaviors, then turning to what lay behind these activities and how they might have led to the development of the goddesses, followed by an examination of the meanings and possible sources of their names. Next, I will discuss the distinctions between them, addressing briefly what separates them, particularly the actions of Isis which led to her incredible prominence in the Hellenistic and classical periods, and finally I will conclude by showing that at the end of the pharaonic period, they still worked as a team very much as they did at the time of their first secure appearance.

Activities and behaviors of the goddesses

At their first appearance,⁴ Isis and Nephthys appear as full-blown, active divinities at the end of the Fifth Dynasty in the Pyramid Texts. These texts provide a comprehensive range of their joint activities and behaviors, virtually all of which related in some way to their sibling Osiris, who himself does not appear in any secure context until the Fifth Dynasty, when his name appears in the mid-Fifth Dynasty tomb of Ti, dating to the reign of Raneferef, for whose solar temple he served as overseer. Osiris's presence in a secure royal context only occurs a bit later in the pyramid of Djedkare Izezi, the penultimate king of that same dynasty.⁵ Significantly, well over half of the references to Isis and Nephthys in the Pyramid Texts involve them acting in concert with or in parallel to each other,⁶ and virtually all of these references entail their acting together on behalf of the deceased in what might be defined as maternal roles, as sisters of Osiris.

As already noted, this myth first appears in a coherent narrative in the Graeco-Roman Period in Plutarch's work titled *De Iside et Osiride*,⁷ a myth further discussed by J.

Gwyn Griffiths in his various books on Osiris, most recently in *The Origins of Osiris and His Cult*.⁸ The myth is also summarized very briefly in Mark Smith's 2017 volume, *Following Osiris*.⁹ And of course the mythic details and actions infuse the entire corpus of the Pyramid Texts. For instance, in one text, the deceased king is instructed to:

[Give] your arm to Isis, Osiris,
And your hand to Nephthys,
And you go between them.

PT 477, §960C10

And he is also informed:

Your sisters Isis and Nephthys come to you,
Making you sound.

PT 366, §628C11

In focusing on the deceased, the sisters' activities include seeking and finding the deceased king (PT §1255a–1256b); proclaiming his arrival in the divine world to the other gods (PT 271 §153a & 155a);¹² greeting, welcoming, speaking, calling, and crying out to him (PT 422, §755a); and waiting for him (PT 366, §630a). One text reads, “Isis speaks to you, Nephthys calls to you” (PT 422, §755a), and another notes, “Isis cries out to you, Nephthys calls out to you” (PT 468, §898a).¹³

In addition, the goddesses engage in mourning activities, such as weeping and crying for the deceased (PT 535, §1281a),¹⁴ along with other expressions of mourning:

Haste, haste! Weep for your brother, Isis! Weep for your brother,
Nephthys! Weep for your brother!

Isis has sat down with her arms atop her, and Nephthys has
seized the tip of her breasts,¹⁵

For their brother Pepi, baby-like on his belly, Osiris in his danger,
Anubis with grasp forward.

PT 535 §1281a–1282b

In addition, they welcome the deceased (PT 553, §1362a), come to him, sit down with him, and wait for him (PT 593, §1630a–b & §1634a).¹⁶ They seek and find him (PT 357, §584a)¹⁷ and sit at his side (PT 356, §577a).¹⁸ Once found, they raise him up (PT 694A, §2144b).¹⁹ Thus, from a ritualistic viewpoint, they find, reassemble, restore, and make him whole or hale (PT 364, §610c),²⁰ thus tending him (PT 357, §584b), as is clear from a text found in Unis's pyramid as well as in the pyramids of the four Sixth Dynasty kings and in that of Queen Neith:

O Isis, this one here is your brother Osiris,
whom you have caused to be restored that he may live;
if he lives, this King will live;
if he does not die, this King will not die;
if he is not destroyed, this King will not be destroyed;
if he does not mourn, this King will not mourn;
if he mourns, this King will mourn...

O Nephthys, this one here is your brother Osiris,
whom you have caused to be restored that he may live;
if he lives, this King will live;
if he does not die, this King will not die;
if he is not destroyed, this King will not be destroyed;
if he does not mourn, this King will not mourn;
if he mourns, this King will mourn.

PT 219, §172a–d & 174a21

Their tending of the deceased extends also to mothering him:

Isis nurses [𓆎] me, Nephthys suckles [snk] me.

PT 268, §371c

Thus both of them together appear to have served as nurses to him.

Each is also identified as bringing the deceased's heart to him, that is, as part of reassembling him, he is given his heart, though not in paired texts as so many of the sisters' activities are presented. Thus two texts tell of Isis bringing

him his heart or spirit, Egyptian *ib* (PT 595. §1690b-c),²² and a separate one speaks of Nephthys doing the same (PT 628, §1768a-b). This concept might well refer to the ancient Egyptian understanding of the centrality of the heart in the body: physically they understood it as the place from which all blood vessels left for the rest of the body and the location through which air passed, traveling from the nose to the anus, while spiritually it served as the seat of reason, thought, love, reflection, and memory, and acted as the person's alter-ego.²³

And once all the parts are assembled, they prepare the corpse for the tomb:

A libation for you is poured out by Isis, Nephthys has cleansed you,
Even your elder and great sisters who gathered your flesh together,
Who raised up your members, and who caused your eyes to appear in
your head:
the Night-bark and the Day-bark.

PT 670, §§1981a-1982a

Nephthys is identified with the Night-bark and Isis the Day-bark (PT 222, §210a-b), the boats associated with the sun's movement on which the deceased travels, the former through the underworld, the latter through the celestial and solar world.

Finally, one curious text, a spell for the protection of the royal tomb, presents very interesting and challenging concepts about a number of major deities, suggesting they might come to do evil to the tomb, among whom are Isis and Nephthys. In this text, Isis appears in her identity of "Putrid Crotch" while Nephthys comes in her identity of "Substitute Who Has No Vulva" (PT534, §1272a-1273b). But interestingly, early in this same spell, the two are described as benefiting "the tomb of him whom Isis respects and Nephthys protects ..." (PT 534, §1265a). Clearly the spell gives us a sense that even in the presumably idyllic

situation of the tomb and the afterlife, a dark side, rarely mentioned, existed, and even the sisters did not avoid it.

Seeking the deceased as birds: the *drt*-bird and the *hꜥt*-bird

As noted, a major task of Isis and Nephthys is seeking and finding the deceased king, Osiris, and they commonly carry out this task as described in the Pyramid Texts in the form of two birds, the *drt*-bird and the *hꜥt*-bird:

The screecher [*hꜥt*] has come, the kite [*drt*] has come: it is Isis and Nephthys.

They have come in search of their brother Osiris, in search of their brother, the king.

PT 535, §1280a

A second text replicates this one but with some further information supporting the seeking and finding of Osiris, which is so critical to the revival of the deceased:

Isis comes, Nephthys comes—one of them from the west, one of them from the east, one of them as a screecher [*hꜥt*], one of them [as] a kite [*drt*]²⁶—and they have found Osiris after his brother Seth threw him down in Nedit...

PT 532, §1255a–1256b²⁴

These are only two of the several texts that involve a pair of kites, or a kite and a similar bird, or simply a kite in referring to Isis and Nephthys,²⁵ and it is clear that seeking Osiris comprises a major feature of the two goddesses in them. Equally clear is that they represent the two kites of Osiris, that is the *drt*₂₆ *Wsꜥr* (PT 258, §308e).²⁷

While translators freely refer to the *drt* as a kite, the *hꜥt* never gets translated as other than a screecher, neither designation very helpful in understanding what kind of birds these are. Andrea Kucharek seeks to clarify the

situation by examining what the *drt* is and discussing the *hꜥt*. Her understanding of the *hꜥt*, which she does not question, is that it is a *Seeschwalbe*, a kind of sea tern of the family *Sturnidae*, in this case a type of raptor bird.²⁸ She does, however, question the usual translation of *drt* as a black kite, *Milvus migrans*.²⁹ In her discussion, she draws heavily on Patrick Houlihan's work on ancient Egyptian birds. He observes that the black kite, still a resident of the Nile valley today and valuable for cleaning up offal, is depicted in Egyptian iconography with the goddesses, and refers specifically to illustrations of the birds as the sisters in Chapter 17 of the New Kingdom Book of the Dead.³⁰ However, Houlihan sees a more definitive identification of the *drt* as a kestrel (see Figure 4.2), a kind of falcon and a common migrant in Egypt even today, noting their abundance in Egypt, the many examples of them on tomb walls, and—perhaps most persuasive—the fact that the kestrel seems “to have been the most frequently mummified falcon.”³¹ He notes further that when kestrels are depicted, they invariably appear in mythological mourning scenes in which the goddesses have assumed the falcon form. Thus he clearly identifies the two sisters as kestrels, *Falco naumanni* or *Falco tinnunculus*.³² Kucharek's discussion of the *drt* and the *hꜥt* stresses that they each seek food from different areas: the tern gathers fish from the water and the kestrel nourishment from land in the form of small animals like rodents, thus fulfilling the mythological areas in which Osiris is presented: water, like the Nile; as well as land, like the borders of the living areas of Egypt.³³

A different approach to why and how the goddesses carried the designation of *drt*- and *hꜥt*-birds, though perhaps not contradictory, lies specifically in the cry of the *drt*-bird. As Henri Frankfort suggested over forty years ago,

the “shrill plaintive cries” of the kite, the *Falco milvus*, reflect the goddesses bewailing Osiris.³⁴ This identification was later reiterated by Joachim Spiegel,³⁵ and even later cited by Griffiths.³⁶ And in yet another approach, Jean Sainte-Fare Garnot has proposed that the reason that Isis and Nephthys were identified with the *drty*-bird lies in their task of seeking and finding the corpse, which was much easier for them to do in bird form.³⁷ Rudolf Anthes noted that the kites were naturally found around mummification activities, waiting for the offal from any corpse, perhaps much as sea birds follow fishing boats waiting for the unusable fish parts that are tossed overboard. He suggests that the reference to *mw* being shot out—it is a liquid in one Pyramid Text (PT 230, §230b)—while two kites stand by, might, in fact, represent offal coming from the corpse.³⁸ By eating the flesh and the offal, the deceased thus provides new life for the carrion eaters: the falcons and the canid, commonly considered Anubis, through their use of these remains as support for their own lives.³⁹ Hence it is possible that the presence of kites and the canid with their offal- and carrion-eating habits might reflect a vestige of what might be called an ancient understanding about the “natural” disposal of the dead.⁴⁰ On the other hand, the kites and canid might not only point to the idea of new life or continuing life but might also refer to searching for and finding the dead, so often mentioned in the Pyramid Texts.⁴¹ Of course, the Egyptians would have quickly sublimated these ideas in line with their aversion to explicit mention of the dark or dangerous side of existence.

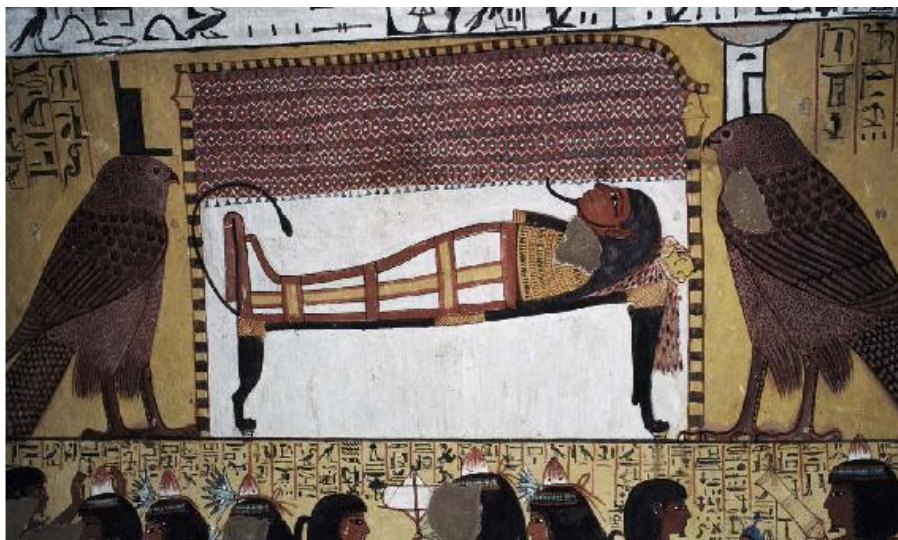


Figure 4.2 Isis at the foot and Nephthys at the head as Kestrels with the coffin of the deceased from the Nineteenth Dynasty tomb of Sennedjem, TT1, south wall of the burial chamber. Photo by De Agostini/Getty Images 475591527.

In addition, a close reading of the Pyramid Texts also shows a series of rituals connected to the preparation and interment of the deceased within which the behaviors of the *ḏryt*-mourners and the canid occur. Siegfried Schott initially addressed this ritual content in the mid-twentieth century,⁴² and soon after Hermann Kees also addressed the issue, suggesting that myth was layered onto early mortuary rituals such that the son called out to waken his father from sleep so that the latter might enjoy food offerings,⁴³ a process we can term mythologization.⁴⁴ Thus when Hartwig Altenmüller notes that in their earliest appearances these birds were in no way deities,⁴⁵ and Griffiths states that both Isis and Nephthys are figures superimposed on the pre-Osirian mourning birds,⁴⁶ they affirm that over time, early ritual practices developed into or became interwoven with Osirian beliefs in something of an evolutionary or developmental process. In this way, we can understand the references to Isis and Nephthys as *ḏrt*-

and *hwt*-birds to be layered over prior rituals and practices that have no mythological meaning prior to the later Osirian mythology. Thus the birds and the canid may represent a very old, if not the oldest, level of mortuary belief for the Egyptians on which other beliefs were layered from which later beliefs developed. The actions of these birds would then constitute a strand of mortuary belief that is initially distinct from Osirian practices, along with other pre-Osirian and non-Osirian beliefs.

Eventually related to the goddesses are various depictions of humans, in what are termed “Bettenszenen,” or bed scenes, that begin to appear in mastaba tombs in the early Old Kingdom in some elite private tombs at Giza, Saqqara, and Dashur, beginning late in the Fourth Dynasty, as well as at Deir el-Gabrawi, el-Hawawish, and Thebes.⁴⁷ Initially these figures appear with no captions but in time they began to bear the caption of *drt*. While found only in mastaba tombs since the royal pyramids lack scenes, these scenes include a bier, that is, the bed on which the deceased is eventually laid out, or a catafalque, a structure in which the bier may be housed, either upright or prone, and placed on a funerary boat or barge. In fact, an early depiction of a bier with a pair of female attendants comes from the Fourth Dynasty of Queen Mersyankh III, the granddaughter of Khufu, the dynasty’s second king, and the wife of Khafre, his son (see Figure 4.3). These attendants, clearly female as illustrated by their garb and lacking any kind of caption, are standing at either end of the bier, clearly prepping the bier for the deceased.⁴⁸ In a number of cases, the figures prepping the biers are male—none of whom bear captions—as in the case of the attendants positioned at either end of the bier or coffin in the Fifth Dynasty mastabas of Nimaatre, Kai-em-Ankh (see Figure 4.4), and Werirenptah (see Figure 4.5),⁴⁹ in which the

figures at the bed are labeled as *wdt twt*, “laying out the bed.”⁵⁰ and the Sixth Dynasty mastabas of Neb-em-akhet and Mereruka.⁵¹

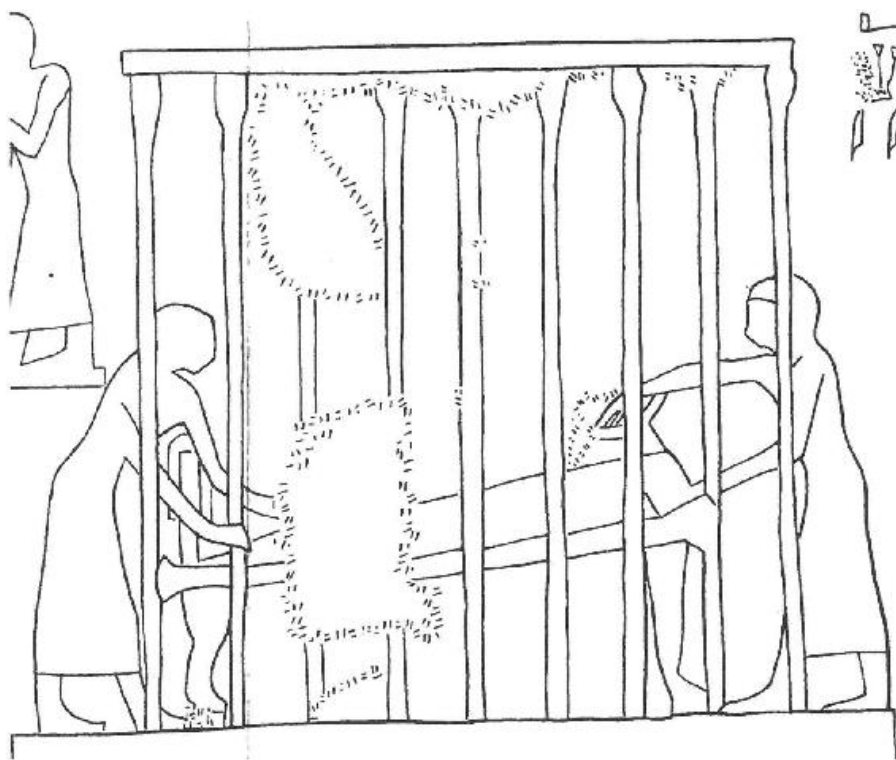


Figure 4.3 Bed scene showing two women preparing the bier from the Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III, G 7530–7540. Fourth Dynasty. Figure © 2019 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

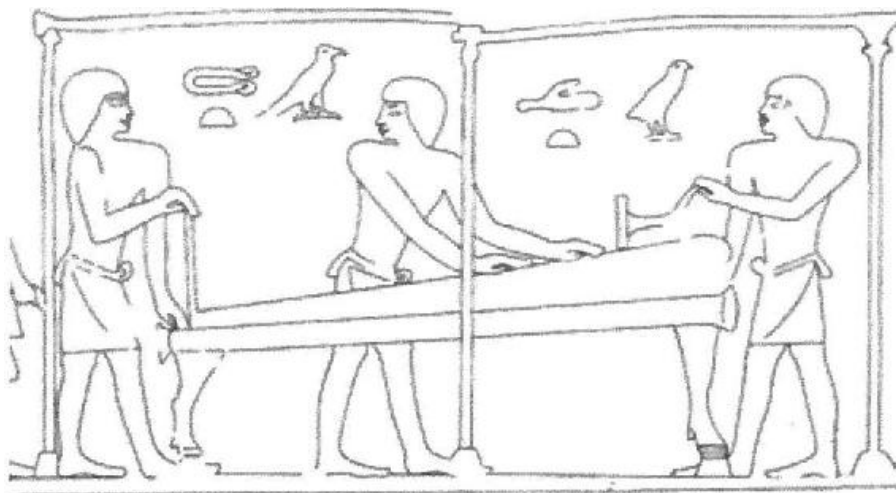


Figure 4.4 Bed scene in the Fifth Dynasty tomb of Kaemankh at Giza. Cult chamber with three males working on the bed. © Naguib Kanawati.

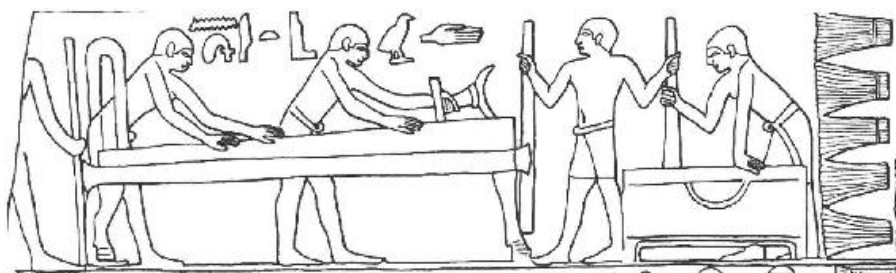


Figure 4.5 Bed scene showing men carrying out funerary preparations from the Tomb of Werirenptah, Saqqara, Fifth-Sixth Dynasty. © Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved.

Related to these bed scenes, we can consider the figures at the ends of the catafalque that is commonly depicted on a boat as part of the funerary procession accompanied by one or usually two figures at either end who bear the title *drt*. These figures—again in a limited review—are clearly female, as they are noted by Henry G. Fischer in his review of *drt*-figures,⁵² though this time they do not represent deities. Examples of these figures occur in the mastabas of two Sixth Dynasty personal scribes of Pepi I Qar (G 7101) (see Figure 4.6) and Idu/Yeduw (G 7102) (see Figure 4.7) at Giza, each of which depicts the funerary boat with a coffin

in a catafalque accompanied by a *drt*-figure on each end of the structure, as well as a male attendant who bears the title of *wt*, embalmer.⁵³

What is clear now is that females labeled *drt* play a part in the funerary rituals and actions at least by the Sixth Dynasty; in fact there is evidence of *drt*-figures no later than the time of the reign of Djedkare/Isesi,⁵⁴ the penultimate king of the Fifth Dynasty, since they appear in a scene in the mastaba of the Fifth Dynasty vizier Ptahhotep I.⁵⁵ Thus it is evident that funerary attendants carried the title *drt* before Isis and Nephthys appear as *drt**y*-birds in the known Pyramid Texts in Pepi I's pyramid, thus in the middle of the twenty-third century BCE. Although the Pyramid Texts of Unis and Teti both refer to Osiris's *drt**y*, two kites, and we might assume they are Isis and Nephthys, the texts do not state that.⁵⁶ There is no question, however, that eventually Isis and Nephthys become identified with the women shown in these representations,⁵⁷ who are designated *drt**y*-mourners in non-royal contexts from the Old Kingdom on, as both Wilson and Fischer have discussed. Fischer in particular noted their characteristic poses, usually seated with their legs under them, their hands in their lap or with one hand on the breast and the other at the side, almost always wearing a sheath dress with hair bound by a fillet (see Figure 4.6). More rarely they stand, with their hands open at their sides, held out, sometimes crossed, or holding one wrist (see Figure 4.7), but the garb remains the same, with the fillets having lappets or streamers hanging behind or down.⁵⁸

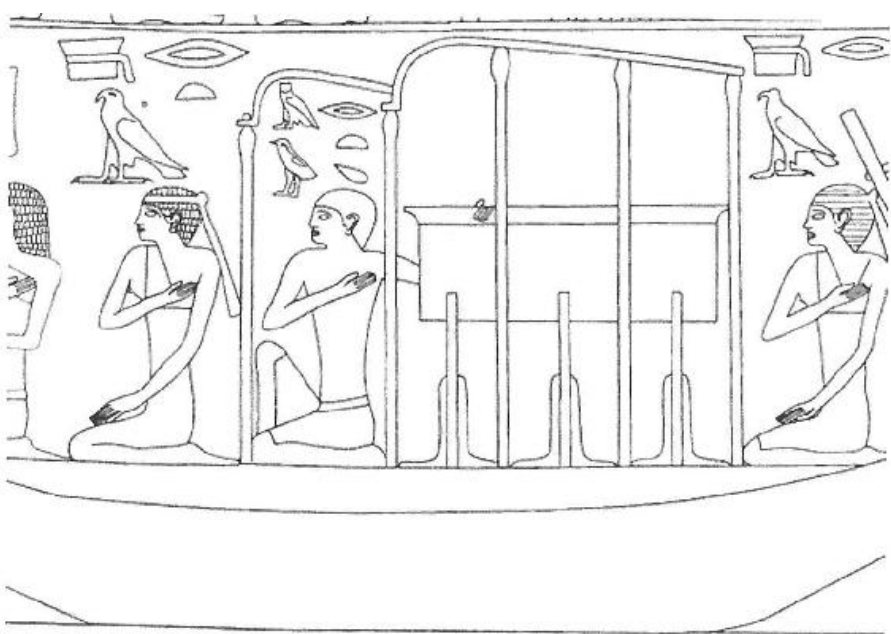


Figure 4.6 Catafalque on funerary boat with kneeling *drti*-figures in front and behind accompanied by a male *wt*-figure, from the Sixth Dynasty tomb of Qar at Giza, G7101, figure 24, north wall, lower half. Figure © 2019 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



Figure 4.7 Catafalque on funerary boat with standing *drty*-figures in front and behind and accompanied by a male *wt*-figure from the Sixth Dynasty tomb of Idu, Giza, G7102, north wall, lower half. Figure © 2019 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Fischer has also identified *dryt*-mourners⁵⁹ in other Old Kingdom contexts, usually carrying offerings,⁶⁰ observing that they appear most commonly in pairs, one in front of the coffin or statue shrine, the catafalque, and the other behind it, as seen in the mastabas of Qar and Idu (see Figures 4.6 and 4.7). In these scenes, the figures appear in pairs and are generally identified as simply *drt*, mostly with the vulture determinative.⁶¹ Occasionally, only one of the pair actually carries the title, but in light of the numerous references to *drty* (PT 230, §230a–d),⁶² that is, two of them, and the two references to the sisters arriving—Isis as the screecher *hꜥt* and Nephthys as the kite *drt* (PT 535, §1280a–

d)⁶³—I suggest that when they appear paired but only one carries the epithet, we can reasonably assume they either both are considered *drt*-figures or one is a *drt* and the other is the *hrt*-figure noted in the Pyramid Texts. Thus the association of Isis and Nephthys with the *drt*-figures—even though they do not appear in the Old Kingdom with the epithet⁶⁴—can lead to the relation of the mortuary function of the *drt*y in the non-royal tombs to the same functions attributed to the goddesses in the Pyramid Texts, which is a major, if not the major, role they play along with that of being mourners or watchers over the deceased. And not surprisingly, in time, the goddesses actually appear on artifacts as *drt*y, the two kites, as Fischer notes in his discussion of a Middle Kingdom model funerary boat on which the figures carry the designation of each goddess prior to a personal name.⁶⁵

Given their role of accompanying the coffin to the burial area, always in the west and usually across water, Isis and Nephthys also bear the epithets of “the moorer” and “the mooring post,”⁶⁶ related to the mooring of boats, that is, of making a boat fast to an immovable location. These epithets (PT 665A. §1905a, lines 26–7)⁶⁷ carry at least two meanings: making firm the deceased at the end point of his journey to the west in their roles as protector and tender of the deceased, as well as suggesting their care for the deceased who can be, as Allen notes, referred to as the “moored one,” a euphemism for the one who has died.⁶⁸ Neither goddess appears consistently carrying one or the other epithet; they are interchangeable, the designation as the “moorer” indicating the action of tying the boat up, while that of the “mooring post” signifies the actual place or post to which the boat was tied and recalls the function of moorings for boats—terms that thus suggest the support and stabilization of the deceased. In another text, the king

notes that Isis handles the bow-line, that is, the line on the forward end of the boat, and Nephthys the stern line, that is, the one at the back end of the boat (PT 548, §1347b); in this case both goddesses would have been active in the tying up of the funerary boat. Taken as a whole, the presence of the goddesses at either end of the bier, emphasized by their similar presence on the funerary boat, serves to illustrate the divine sisters' participation in activities related to the mortuary rituals and to the preparation of the deceased for burial, a quite common role for pairs of women in traditional cultures even in the modern world.

Names of the goddesses

A long history lies behind discussions about the meanings of the goddess's names: Isis, *ꜥst*, depicted with a seat or throne on her head, and Nephthys, *nb-ḥwt*, shown with the *nb*-sign and the *ḥwt*-sign on her head (see Figure 4.8). It is important to ask, however, if they did not in some way appear prior to their clear presence in the Pyramid Texts, although they may have been related in some way to the mortuary ritual prior to those texts,⁶⁹ this despite the limited secure references to Osiris, the central figure in the mortuary practices, prior to the appearance in the earliest of the Pyramid Texts at the end of the Fifth Dynasty. Barbara Begelsbacher-Fischer's careful work on the world of the gods during the Fourth and Fifth Dynasties has shown that, at least when she did her research in the late 1970s/early 1980s, these goddesses are completely lacking from personal names,⁷⁰ which is not particularly surprising, given the situation with Osiris. Furthermore, it would not have been culturally acceptable to bear a name related to a mortuary figure. A similar lack of any titles

incorporating their names further suggests that their roles were linked entirely to the mortuary realms, except for the example of Pepi-Ankh the Middle, a man from Meir, in the 14th Upper Egyptian nome dating to the mid-Sixth Dynasty, whose title string included “priest of Isis and Hathor,”⁷¹ suggesting Isis received cult there. This title reveals nothing about Isis herself, however, save that in some way in this place at this time a priest reports that he served her and Hathor, the latter who had a major cult place in the nome’s capital of Kusae. In fact, Isis apparently does not truly receive cult or have her own cult places until the Middle Kingdom, when she appears to have a cult temple at Abydos and to appear in other cult places shared with various deities.⁷²

Although no clear evidence of the goddesses in terms of personal names or titles is evident in the Old Kingdom, the idea of an oral tradition reflecting their presence in the Early Dynastic Period that might precede their presence in the Pyramid Texts suggests the appropriateness of looking at what materials from this time might provide. For this we turn to Peter Kaplony’s collection of inscriptions dating from the First through the Third Dynasties, which, while not complete, especially today, and lacking provenance for many of the inscriptions, still remains a useful resource for such a search.⁷³ In fact, Kaplony identified five possible names incorporating Isis’s name by reading her name in a *st*-hieroglyph, a sign understood variously to mean seat, place, or even throne, in the notably difficult early writings, and even he consistently expressed hesitation at definitively identifying the word as referring to or meaning the goddess in this period.⁷⁴ In fact, at least two of the examples of *st* actually appear to refer to a seat, perhaps representing the office related to ruling or leading.⁷⁵ These examples include *pr-stht jst*⁷⁶ and *wpj-jst*,⁷⁷ the former of

which we can read as a title on a seal used by officials acting on behalf of a specific special place, perhaps related to leadership (much as one speaks of the “White House” or “10 Downing Street”), thus a title which might speak to their function in relation to the king, while the latter may be a personal name or a title. A third example, *smr jst-k*,⁷⁸ is also arguably a name. More likely, it represents a title,⁷⁹ particularly because *smr*,⁸⁰ a word meaning friend or companion, appears as a title in the Old Kingdom.⁸¹

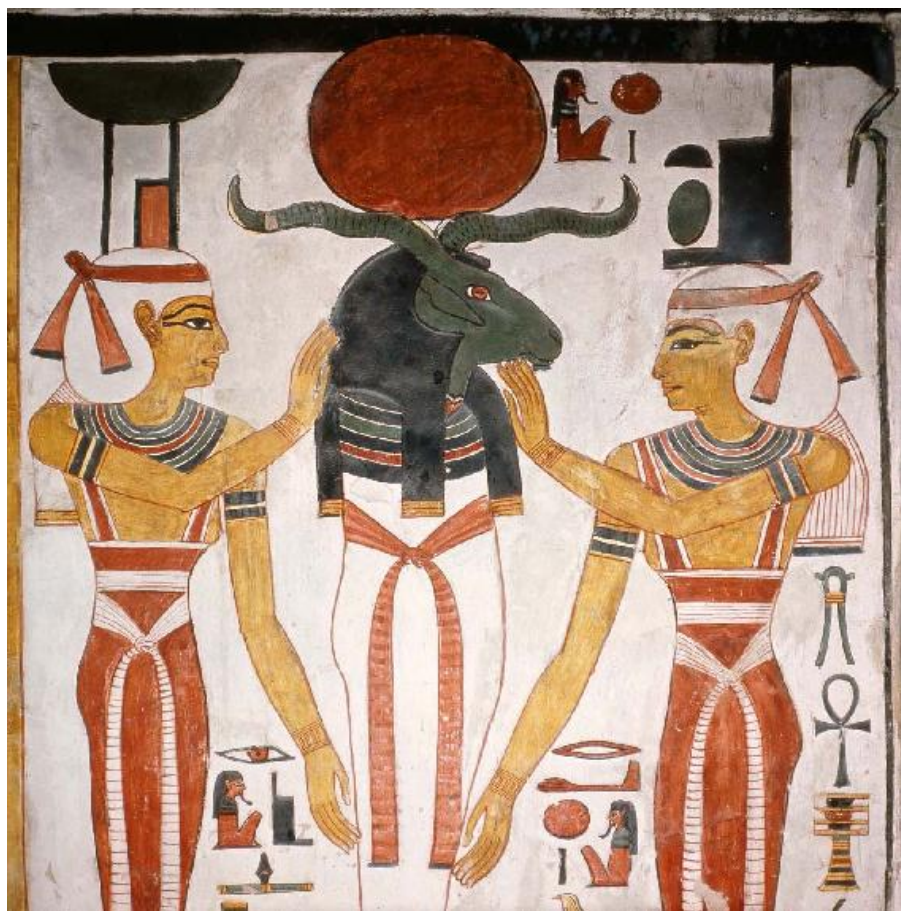


Figure 4.8 Isis and Nephthys crowned with their hieroglyphic names from a wall painting in Queen Nefertari’s tomb, Nineteenth Dynasty. Photo by Werner Forman/Universal Images Group/Getty Images 152198373.

The other two names, *jstj-ḥwj-f*⁸² and *z-jst*,⁸³ might well

be personal names. ḥstj-ḥwj-f with a meaning of “st protects,” that is, “the seat protects,” fits with typical theophoric names, but barring any other evidence of a deity named Isis in personal names in this early period, the “special seat/place” or implied “power of the special seat/place” is a better translation, particularly since the hieroglyph is simply the seat/place sign. Similarly zḥst might be understood as “son of the special seat/place,” again because the hieroglyph is the bare sign for seat, in fact a fine name or moniker for the son, especially an heir, particularly since Kaplony notes that all three exemplars of this name belong to a prince, a son of the very early King Aha, ḥ .⁸⁴ Ultimately then, there is no definitive evidence of the presence of Isis in theophoric names or titles in the Early Dynastic period, even if one includes the Third Dynasty, as does Kaplony.

As for the possible evidence of Nephthys in these early materials, the issue is quite straightforward: *nbt ḥwt* simply does not appear; she and her name are a non-issue. In fact, there is an overall lack of concern about and interest in her. Kurt Sethe, the late-nineteenth/early-twentieth-century German Egyptologist, notably described her as “perhaps only an artificially created partner for Seth without special significance.”⁸⁵

Ultimately then, there is no secure documentable evidence of the presence of the name of either Isis or Nephthys prior to their appearance in the Pyramid Texts. Thus to address what these names might mean requires other sources and, for those, returning to the bed scenes, that is the mortuary relationship and the *ḏrt*-figures. The *ḏrt* epithet later carried by Isis and Nephthys will help us address the background, possible origins, and meaning of their respective names, particularly since numerous commentators have used the bed scenes to attempt to

elucidate their names. For example, Altenmüller notably hypothesizes that Isis's and Nephthys's names derive from their places at the head and the foot of the bier, as the scenes progress from depicting the preparation in this world to the actual funeral processions with travel to the west and the mortuary areas.⁸⁶

Isis's name

Altenmüller devotes several articles to seeking the origins of and rituals related to the birth of the divine kings⁸⁷ in which he uses bed scenes to seek an understanding of related rituals while elucidating his ideas about the origins of the names of Osiris, *Wsṯr*, and Isis, *ḥst* or *jst*,⁸⁸ each written with the same seat sign, the Egyptian *st*,⁸⁹ that is basic to the names of both Isis and Osiris. Beginning in ancient Egypt itself at the time of the Pyramid Texts and the Coffin Texts and coming up to the modern day, commentators have speculated and sought to explain the meaning of Osiris's name without reaching any consensus,⁹⁰ quite commonly explaining the meaning of Isis's name as a personification of the king's throne.⁹¹ Taking an alternative approach, Altenmüller looks at the bed itself on which the deceased is laid, one word for which is *st*, as was also noted by Edward Brovarski, who in his study of Old Kingdom nomenclature made use of a number of bed scenes and took particular note of the attendants related to the bed.⁹² These attendants, both men and women and uniformly lacking titles, are engaged in preparing the bed, smoothing it, and bringing in necessary items such as headrests,⁹³ thus depicting preparations needed prior to the actual placement of the deceased on it.⁹⁴ It is the word *st* that Altenmüller understands as providing the origin of Osiris's name, that is, the term by which the deceased is known in the Pyramid Texts, and he

concludes that the god's name is actually derived from *jry-st-jryt*, "the one who belongs to the made bed," that is the prepared bed, the bier.⁹⁵

Altenmüller focuses on the furnishing of the bed, in this case the setting in place the *wrs*, the headrest, suggesting that through a linguistic change, the setting up of the headrest results in Isis's name coming from her function: the setting up of the headrest, that is, the one who sets it up.⁹⁶ This suggestion proves problematic, given there is no evidence to suggest the goddesses played a part in preparing the bed. In fact, while there are exceptions, for example Mersyankh III's mastaba, the vast number of bed preparation scenes involve men, not females—and certainly not goddesses. Another problem with Altenmüller's suggestion lies in his understanding of the common epithet referring to her as the "one who stands before the deceased" as the deity who appears at the head of the bier. He supports this idea by citing a miter inscription, that is, one of a number of inscriptions which appear in the joins of the sides and ends of some Middle Kingdom rectangular coffins,⁹⁷ which reads, "Words said by Nut: '(I) [have] given you Isis under your head.'" ⁹⁸ Actually, however, her position in the Pyramid Texts—clearly the earliest references that position her—describe her as standing before the deceased, that is, a position placing her at the foot of the bed, while Nephthys stands behind the deceased, that is, at the head.⁹⁹ A reality check notes that to stand before someone means that he or she can see the individual standing before him or her, while to stand behind means that he or she cannot see that other person. Thus, the idea of Isis as "the one of the headrest" conflicts with the Pyramid Texts, which state she is before the deceased and Nephthys is behind the deceased (PT 505, §1089d).¹⁰⁰ Instead, it makes better sense to see her

functioning as the actual bed, the *st*, particularly since Brovarski notes that during the Old Kingdom it is clear that *st* referred to seat. He observed further that in the Pyramid Texts, the word *st* “is applied to a ‘throne’ with bull’s legs and papyrus terminals on the side-rails.”¹⁰¹ Indeed in a separate discussion of the chair or seat, Fischer noted that “[i]n the Old Kingdom the word *st*, ‘seat’ or ‘place,’ referred to any piece of furniture on which one rested, whether seated or reclining,”¹⁰² thus providing no specific structural reference. The term is defined the same way in the Wörterbuch’s “place of the body,” *st-(n)-ḥt*.¹⁰³ Using this approach, Isis might be seen as simply the seat or bed on which the deceased, Osiris, lies.

Interestingly, the seat might also be considered the mother’s lap, as visually depicted in the lovely alabaster statuette of Pepi II on his mother Ankhes-Meryre II’s lap¹⁰⁴ (see Figure 4.9), a composition that occurs regularly in much later periods with Isis holding Horus on her lap¹⁰⁵ (see Figure 4.10). Indeed a second alabaster statuette, this time of Pepi I, presents the king seated on a simple throne on the back of which stands a falcon¹⁰⁶ (see Figure 4.11), providing possible evidence of ancient Egyptian wordplay in visualizing the throne here as the goddess’s seat, as in the hieroglyphic rendering of her name. In other words, perhaps the seat as a place for Horus’s care relates to Isis’s name. In fact, Griffiths suggests that the use of *st* in a Pyramid Text that states “This King makes his place/seat as Osiris” (PT 684, §2054) reflects the traditional etymology of Osiris’s name using paronomasia,¹⁰⁷ a favorite form of wordplay among the ancient Egyptians,¹⁰⁸ similar to modern punning.

Nephthys’s name

In analyzing Nephthys’s name, Altenmüller examines it

from a functional point of view, as he did with Isis, relating her name to her role and actions.¹⁰⁹ To begin, he reviews the various prior concepts of the meaning of Nephthys's name in hieroglyphs, *nbt-ḥwt*, starting with its common translation as "mistress of the *ḥwt*," perhaps as Sethe suggests, a name created artificially and without any special meaning for her as the wife of the god Seth,¹¹⁰ essentially a housewife. In this case, the word *ḥwt* refers to a house or part of a house. Although this translation is the usual one and there is no question about the meaning of *nbt* as mistress, the meaning of *ḥwt* in Nephthys's name has proved to be quite challenging, not least because its usual literal translation of the hieroglyph is that of "temple" or "palace,"¹¹¹ while the Old Kingdom use of the word designates rather a settlement, estate, town, or city.¹¹² Various commentators have suggested alternative meanings, including "heavenly goddess," which gives the house a cosmic aspect, perhaps even encompassing the universe.¹¹³ Because of Nephthys's role in the mortuary realm, Altenmüller suggests rather that the *ḥwt* reflects the embalming place and therefore she is "mistress of the embalming place," although he concedes that this epithet has never appeared, so that discussion must remain open.¹¹⁴



Figure 4.9 Statuette of Queen Ankhnes-Meryre II and her son, Pepi II, c. 2288–2224 or 2194 BCE, Egyptian alabaster. Brooklyn Museum, Charles Edwin Wilbour Fund, 39.119. Photo © Brooklyn Museum, 39.119.



Figure 4.10 Isis nursing Horus, seventh–sixth centuries BCE, bronze. Photo by CM Dixon/Heritage Images/Getty Images 918989990.

There are, however, approaches to the word *ḥwt* other than seeing it as a palace, temple, or “embalming place.” Patricia Spencer outlines various meanings for *ḥwt* in her

lexicographical study on the Egyptian temple, and she finds two major uses for it in the Old Kingdom: first, it was the supporting foundation for the mortuary cult, and second, it referred to an actual temple in which functionaries carried out cult.¹¹⁵ Ultimately she concludes that *ḥwt*, when not standing for *ḥwt-nṯr*, temple, referred to the foundation that provided support for funerary cults and the necessary attendant administration.¹¹⁶ Using this analysis for Nephthys's name, the *ḥwt* in it may well refer to the foundation supporting the royal mortuary cult in the Old Kingdom.

Erik Hornung, in his 1992 description of Nephthys as "the goddess in the shadow,"¹¹⁷ suggests that the *ḥwt* of Nephthys's name actually refers to her as mistress of the temple, specifically the royal mortuary temple or some other holy place, where she acts in the divine sphere as "an ultimately anonymous power in a given sanctuary or as spouse of the main deity."¹¹⁸ Referring to an early Twenty-Second Dynasty coffin, he notes that the deceased, a priest of the god Amun, after referring to his wife by name several times, designates her as "Nephthys, sister of the gods," depicting his wife with the hieroglyphic sign of the deity on her head, thus raising her to the role of the "‘housewife’ for the priests ... in the divine sphere."¹¹⁹ This idea refers to a much later concept, however, that may or may not truly reflect the thinking of a millennium and a half earlier. In fact, in continuing his comments on Nephthys, Hornung argues that she is no shadow or reflection of Isis, as has often been asserted. He also understands the statement that "Isis is before and Nephthys is behind" as Isis appearing at the foot of the bier and Nephthys at the head,¹²⁰ asserting that Nephthys acts as a protective power for the king.¹²¹ Finally, recognizing Nephthys as related to the dark side, Hornung notes that

Isis has to do with the birth and beginning while Nephthys relates to death and the end,¹²² a concept related to her link to the Night-boat when Isis is similarly linked to the Day-boat (PT222 210a–c), as we saw earlier.



Figure 4.11 Seated Statuette of Pepi I with Horus Falcon, c. 2338–2298 BCE, Egyptian alabaster. Brooklyn Museum, Charles Edwin Wilbour Fund, 39.120. Photo © Brooklyn Museum, 39.120.

More recently, Juan Carlos Moreno Garcia carried out a comprehensive study of the *hwt*, concluding with the observation that it “was a prestigious construction whose name was applied to installations dependent on royalty, be that palace rooms [or] cultural and administrative centers.”¹²³ Although Moreno Garcia does not relate this idea to Nephthys, Jessica Lévai in her dissertation, “Aspects of the Goddess Nephthys, especially in the Graeco-Roman Period of Egypt,” suggests that Moreno Garcia’s idea that Nephthys’s name might also relate to installations dependent on royalty and the goddess’s role, particularly insofar as such installations supported mortuary foundations, was to oversee appropriate support for the deceased.¹²⁴ And as Maria Münster had observed earlier in relation to the activities of Nephthys and Isis,¹²⁵ Lévai notes that the pairing of Nephthys with Isis from the beginning, the latter whose royal connections are very clear, means that any royal relation of the one applies to the other as well.¹²⁶

In sum, this review of the goddesses’s names—with the complete understanding of them still open for discussion—relates each to specific but complementary functions in supporting the deceased: Isis is the bed or bier including the headrest or even a place to sit, while Nephthys provides the necessary material and cultic support, clearly complementary activities. Each thus supports the deceased in the afterlife in complementary and necessary ways, perhaps symbolically expressed in their positions before and behind the deceased in text and iconography, that is, Isis and Nephthys at the foot and head, respectively, of the bier in the Old Kingdom¹²⁷ (see Figure 4.1).

Individual roles and actions

Although well over half the references to Isis and Nephthys in the Pyramid Texts depict them acting in concert with or parallel to each other,¹²⁸ within this corpus, we also find texts that present each goddess as an individual carrying out actions not shared by the other, and it is those of Isis alone that lead to the kind of understanding expressed by Witt.

Isis's unique activities

Although many of the Pyramid Texts which mention Isis alone without Nephthys actually describe activities the pair commonly carries out together in their combined maternal/mother roles of caring for the newly deceased (PT 357, §592a),¹²⁹ a number of texts point to roles and actions unique to her. The most notable of these relate to her interaction with Osiris to procreate Horus, the living king whose responsibility in the mortuary world involved the ritual of the opening the mouth of his father Osiris, likely the most important ritual among the ancient Egyptians,¹³⁰ predating the Pyramid Texts and an action reflected in a number of Pyramid Texts.¹³¹ Since Horus is the one to carry out the mouth-opening ritual, his procreation and birth are essential to the revivification of the deceased, and so the three discrete texts specifically discussing his procreation by Isis and Osiris are extremely important, appearing in the pyramids of each of the Sixth Dynasty kings as well as in the pyramid of Queen Wedjetbetni, a wife of Pepi II (PT 366, §633b).¹³² All three reflect in one way or another the myth involving the posthumous creation of the deceased's successor. In one of them, the officiant commands Osiris, that is, the deceased king, to stand up and to act as he did in commending Horus to Isis "on the day you impregnated her" (PT 518, §1199c), referring, of course, to the posthumous procreation of his

son Horus, implying that Osiris initiated the action despite being dead. The other two texts, each depicting the stellar realm, are nearly identical,¹³³ and also suggest that Osiris is actively involved, despite being deceased, in the procreation of his son:

Your sister Isis has come to you, excited for love of you.

You have put her on your phallus¹³⁴ so that your seed might emerge into her,

Sharp as Sothis, and sharp Horus has emerged from you as Horus in Sothis.¹³⁵

You have become *akh* in him in his identity of the *akh* in the Djenderu bark,

And he tends you in his identity of Horus, the son who tends his father.

PT 366, §632a-d¹³⁶

Clearly, however, nowhere in this passage do we find Isis in the active role that she exhibits in her relation to Osiris that occurs in later texts, such as the Great Hymn to Osiris (Louvre C 286) and Plutarch's second-century CE *De Iside et Osiride*. In fact, the Great Hymn to Osiris, found on a stela belonging to an Eighteenth Dynasty official named Amenmose, presents the fullest myth about Osiris in Egyptian materials. The pertinent part of this interesting hymn reads as follows:

His sister was his guard, she who drives off the foes,

Who stops the deeds of the disturber by the power of her utterance.

The clever-tongued whose speech fails not, effective in the word of command,

Mighty Isis who protected her brother, who sought him without tiring.

Who roamed the land lamenting, not resting till she found him,

Who made a shade with her plumage,¹³⁷ created breath with her wings.

Who jubilated, joined her brother, raised the weary one's inertness,

Received his seed, bore the heir, raised the child in solitude,

His abode unknown.¹³⁸

In this New Kingdom hymn, by raising "the weary one's inertness," Isis has moved from being merely a recipient, as

she appears in the Pyramid Texts, to being the instigator of action. Her move from recipient of the deceased Osiris's seed to active pursuit of it appears even more explicitly on two Late Period papyri, P. Louvre I 3079¹³⁹ and BM I 10208 I.¹⁴⁰ The latter has missing pieces but nevertheless fits with the former, with a text that states, as part of the glorification of Osiris during the month of Khoiak:

I am your sister, Isis;

There is no god or goddess who did what I have done;

I acted as a man/husband, even though I am a woman/wife.¹⁴¹

To “act as a man” here moves Isis even further than raising “the weary one’s inertness,” although the result is the same: Isis made it possible to receive the semen of her deceased husband and was thus able to conceive and give birth to a legitimate heir who must perform the mouth-opening ritual to ensure his father’s life in the next world, that is, “the son who tends his father” of the Pyramid Texts about his procreation (PT 366, §633b).¹⁴² Significantly, she in fact both begets and conceives the child Horus in this description.¹⁴³ And of course the Pyramid Texts reports that she bears him, simply stating, “You have borne him” (PT 669, §1965a). Another text reports that she bore him in Chemmis, Egyptian *ḥḥbjt*,¹⁴⁴ a location in the Nile Delta, thus bringing in some of the mythology surrounding his birth: the location was chosen to avoid Seth’s predation and attempts to do away with the child.

The results of this impregnation, of course, appear as their son Horus, and we find the texts mention Isis and Horus as mother and son, in one of which the deceased king, when greeting the gods, states, “I have looked on you as Horus looks on Isis” (PT 308, §489a). And naturally as his mother, Isis nurses Horus at her breast, as one Pyramid Text states (PT 268, §371c). In another, the deceased is

instructed, “Here is the breast of your lactating sister Isis,¹⁴⁵ which you should take in your mouth” (PT 42, §32b), while yet another simply notes the newborn deceased has milk from his mother Isis’s breasts (PT 413, §734b), as do several other texts.¹⁴⁶ A fifth text related to Isis and her breast only implies milk being given to her son (PT689, §2089b).

Several additional texts unique to Isis simply mention activities that occur around the birth and care of any baby, for example, one introducing her to Horus (PT 417, §741a) in a manner reminiscent of a midwife, nurse, or doctor presenting a newborn to his mother, and a second which speaks of Isis raising Horus (PT 510, §1140c). In another unique text, Isis inducts the deceased into a structure, *hnw mnjw*, (PT 419, §744a),¹⁴⁷ probably a catafalque or something similar, related to the mortuary and/or funerary activities given the context of watchers mourning the deceased. Another unique text simply describes Isis and Osiris as content, and one pair among other pairs of the Heliopolitan Ennead, among which is Seth and Neith, though one expects to see Nephthys, not Neith (PT 577, §1521b).¹⁴⁸

Ultimately the texts that relate to Isis alone essentially focus on the deceased and her facilitation of his procreation of Horus the son, his (re)birth, the provision of his heart or spirit and providing her breast to Horus, with only one text in which she is said to nurse (*ḥt*) him (PT 268, §371c) and one other which tells him that the breast of his lactating sister Isis is there for him to take (PT42, 32b).¹⁴⁹ From these activities and their implications, most notably the conditions and context of the Graeco-Roman world, she develops into a kind of deity who rises to great importance beginning with the Hellenistic Period.¹⁵⁰

Nephthys's unique activities

Despite Hornung's characterization of Nephthys as the "goddess in the shadow" along with Sethe's comment that she was "perhaps only the artistically created partner for Seth without any special meaning,"¹⁵¹ the reality of the Pyramid Texts as well as much iconographic material provides evidence that not only was Nephthys Isis's equal partner in mourning the deceased and in seeking and tending him, but also that she had several attributes not shared with Isis, some of which, like those of her sister, contributed to the basic care of the deceased. Thus Nephthys sought for the deceased; assembling him, even giving him his heart; calling, greeting, and welcoming him; and sharing the role of nurse with Isis. However, in this nurse role, Nephthys suckles (*snk*) the babe (PT 365, §623a-b),¹⁵² a verb never used in descriptions of Isis's actions. A related text refers to Nephthys as his nurse (*mn^ct*), an epithet also not given to Isis (PT 555, §1375a).¹⁵³ Perhaps there is an implication here that Nephthys's role was much like that of a wet nurse, a common activity in which a nursing woman helps other women to care for and nurse a newborn. There is, however, one text that states:

Isis *šsp* me;
Nephthys *wtt* me.

PT 1154a

While the Egyptian *wtt* clearly means to "beget," the meaning of *šsp* proves more challenging, notably in this context. Faulkner translates it as "conceives,"¹⁵⁴ while Allen chooses to translate it as "receives,"¹⁵⁵ as does Carrier,¹⁵⁶ both actually in line with the *Wörterbuch* definition of receive, greet, accept.¹⁵⁷ Thus the consensus, with which I agree, is that the text reads as follows:

Isis greets/receives me;
Nephthys begets me.

And the sense of the whole, one which my students loved, is a reversal of the common thought that Isis bore the king and Nephthys served as the receiver, even as a midwife does. Alternatively, assuming the meaning of “beget” lies with the male’s action, Nephthys appears to be acting in a male role¹⁵⁸ and Isis is greeting her child immediately following the child’s birth as does any mother who has just given birth. Customary Western-type logic is not at play here.

One unique text, which outlines the mouth-opening ritual by Horus, and the activities of the sisters in making the deceased hale, refers to Nephthys as Sheshat, Lady of Builders, who has collected the limbs of the deceased (PT 364, §616b), which was an activity the sisters accomplished together or in parallel, as noted earlier. The equation with Seshat, however, emphasizes Nephthys’s role as an assembler, one who brings together the parts of the deceased to restore him to wholeness, also a task that Seshat carried out. A second text relates Nephthys very specifically to the restoration of the deceased:

Raise yourself, clear away your dust, remove the shroud on your face.
Loosen your ties: they are not ties; they are the tresses of Nephthys.

PT 553, §1363c

This text speaks to the freeing of the deceased from his mummy bindings, and he is assured that these bindings cannot restrict him since they are simply Nephthys’s hair. Arguably this text might be understood as part of the theme of the resurrection of the deceased, which constitutes one of the major tasks shared by the sisters, but the reference to hair is distinctive for Nephthys.

In yet another unique text, *nbt-ḥwt* has been variously

translated as “Lady of the Mansion,” “House of the Mistress,” and Nephthys herself (PT 534, §1278c).¹⁵⁹ This text—noted previously due to its very interesting and challenging negative concepts regarding the goddesses—speaks to Nephthys as seeker of anyone who curses or otherwise negatively acts against the tomb and its owner.

He who shall give his finger¹⁶⁰ against this pyramid and this god’s
compound of mine and of my *ka*,

He has given his finger against Horus’s Compound in the Cool Waters.

Nephthys shall traverse for him every place of his [father] Geb.

His case has been heard by the Ennead and he has nothing,

He has no house.

He is one accursed,

He is one who eats his own body.

PT 534, §1278a–1279c

Clearly this text states that Nephthys will seek the offender everywhere to bring him to judgment, and thus she represents a threat to anyone who raises a finger against the temple, that is, curses it. Presumably she will catch or at least locate that individual, at which point he will be judged and annihilated.¹⁶¹

In one final text unique to Nephthys, she is reported to be at the side of the king, protecting him (PT 359, §601e). This again is a behavior shared by Isis, as the pair protect and care for the deceased; however, the pairing in this text does not share a parallel with any text specifically related to Isis.

Conclusion

A summary of the goddesses’ independent activities clearly foregrounds Isis as compared to Nephthys, but those focusing on Isis come solely from her relationship to Osiris and the resulting conception and birth of Horus. The related mortuary activities by the goddesses on behalf of

the deceased, who could be identified as Horus¹⁶² or Osiris or any of several other deities,¹⁶³ clearly derived from earlier mortuary rituals and ritual behaviors, and significantly the partnership behaviors of the two sisters in relation to Osiris, so dominant in the Pyramid Texts as well as characteristics of women in relation to funerary actions in all times and all places and which never ceased throughout Egyptian history as demonstrated by mortuary materials up into the Hellenistic Period. Indeed from this period, the late fourth century BCE, come documents attesting to their continued collaboration, among which are “The Songs of Isis and Nephthys”¹⁶⁴ and “The Lamentations of Isis and Nephthys,”¹⁶⁵ among numerous others.¹⁶⁶ The “Lamentations” and the “Songs” were both related to temple rituals related to the Osirian Mysteries,¹⁶⁷ although the “Lamentations” was first identified as part of a Book of the Dead papyrus (Papyrus Berlin 3008) belonging to a late fourth-century BCE woman. In these two hymns, albeit quite different from each other, Isis and Nephthys engage in a dialogue, actually sung or chanted duets, lamenting over the deceased Osiris, variously calling to him to return, expressing their love and concern for him, and telling him of his vindication. Isis sings more than Nephthys, but the overall picture is one of sharing the task of mourning,¹⁶⁸ just as they did in the earliest texts. Quite significantly, the opening stanza of the “Songs” begins by noting “the Festival of the Two Kites.”¹⁶⁹

None of this understanding about the sisters’ shared behavior accounts for the eventual prominence of Isis in the later stages of Egyptian history, when she takes on some of the attributes of other goddesses, notably the horns and sun disk of Hathor in the New Kingdom. Nor does it explain the very different but complementary roles as presented by Hornung: Isis related to birth and

beginning and Nephthys to death and end and Isis to the Day Boat and Nephthys to the Night Boat. So how, when Isis and Nephthys still appear as partners mourning Osiris in temple rituals at Abydos, in the Mysteries in later Egyptian history, and in hymns dating to the Ptolemaic Period beginning in the late fourth century BCE, does the Isis described by Witt emerge? As explained briefly in an essay by Rory Egan entitled “Isis: Goddess of the Oikoumene,”¹⁷⁰ the world in which the Isis of Witt’s volume appears is the cosmopolitan one that developed following the conquests of Alexander in the fourth century BCE, a result of the tenuous union of many varied cultures. Goddesses played important roles in these varied cultures, particularly in Greece, but among the wide variety of the various goddesses’ attributes and actions related to specific age groups, genders, and cultures none spoke to large groups of people, especially women and their families.¹⁷¹ Isis, in contrast, with her multiple roles and many attributes, gathered in herself what other goddesses had but without any one cultural meaning being dominant. Thus lacking the limitations of the other deities, in Isis people found a unity in that she could and did meet the needs of all. That this Isis resembled only a small aspect of the Egyptian Isis surely led to Egan’s own caveat and caution to others, when he observes that “romantic hyperbole” in relation to earlier cultures can lead to “a natural tendency to retroject into antiquity some of the conditions and characteristics of more recent phases in the history of European religions.”¹⁷² This can also be the case within disciplines, such as Egyptology with its long history of ancient Egyptian deities.

In sum, Isis and Nephthys appear only as mortuary deities in the Old Kingdom materials, working largely in concert with each other, acting to restore and revive the

deceased king—often termed Osiris but sometimes Horus—to life among the gods. A limited number of materials refer to Isis alone in her relation to Osiris, with whom she conceives her son Horus. Nephthys too has several texts in which she acts alone, though considerably fewer. Thus overall—given that these conclusions might result in slightly different answers, depending on how any text is read—in both the hieroglyphs themselves and the translations of them, only a small number of texts are truly unique to one or the other out of the entire corpus found in the Old Kingdom pyramids.

Conclusion

The five goddesses under review here—along with the short, too short, discussion of Bat—originated in ancient Egypt at different times and for different reasons and are known essentially from the roles and functions they filled from their earliest appearances in texts and on artifacts. Each of them played a significant role in the Egyptian pantheon throughout pharaonic history, and even beyond in the case of Isis. Although some of the discussion here collects the earliest known activities and significant relationships for each deity in one place, a major focus seeks to understand the origins or possible origins of each one, since in every case the initial appearance of the deity in question presents a fully formed being. Thus seeking the backstory for each goddess should help us understand more about the deity in question and assist in gaining a better comprehension of the mythology and history of the ancient Egyptian understanding of their gods and their activities. Some of the discussion upends the commonly thought initial appearance of the deity in question, notably Hathor, while considerations of the origins are less opaque for others, notably in the case of Isis and Nephthys, who clearly derive from the typical female role in preparing a corpse for burial in cultures the world over.

Within the introduction, I present a very brief discussion of the Pyramid Texts dating to the late Old Kingdom, the major textual source on these deities for the time period. These texts have been much discussed since they were

discovered and remain the subject of continuing research and consideration. I then present Neith, who in every way might provide the biggest puzzle of these goddesses. Most commonly described as a warrior deity, due to her much later appearance with a bow and arrow and because her earliest symbol was initially thought to be two arrows crossing a shield, I suggest, along with a very few others, that she may derive from a hunting culture. It is also commonly thought that her origins lie in Libya to the west, though her earliest known iconographic representation comes from Upper Egypt. Her so-called shield actually represents the back ends of two coleoptera beetles fused together and crossed by two arrows. Although I have not attempted to discuss what these arrows mean or symbolize, that the background figure to the two arrows is not and cannot be a shield is evident because its shape and size simply cannot provide the protection that a shield must provide to be effective. Neith may also have some relation to creation as well, as seen in considerable detail in the Neith texts from the Ptolemaic Temple at Esna. Although we must be extremely careful about applying later concepts to earlier times, there is no doubt that Neith has some significant relation to the continuation of the universe and thus possibly its creation, as is clear in “The Contendings of Horus and Seth,” when she threatens to end the world should her will to place Horus on the throne not be done.

In addition, the exact meaning of her early symbol of the click beetle, one of the coleoptera beetle family, *Elateridae*, is far from clear, but it is well known to produce a clicking sound from which it gets its common name. In addition, this beetle is commonly seen hopping around the flood waters, thus associating it with the flood as is Neith notably in her appearance as Mehet Weret. She also plays a role in

weaving, leading to her later association with Athena, the Greek warrior and weaving goddess. At this time, evidence of her between the end of the Old Kingdom and the time of the Saïte Dynasty, the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty, is quite limited; even her priestesses begin to disappear during the later part of the Old Kingdom. Of course this situation may well change—and I trust it will—as continued archaeological work continues in Egypt, particularly in the Delta, most especially at Saïs.

The discussion of Hathor, particularly of her possible origins, is perhaps the most challenging and might prove the most controversial, suggesting as it does that she does not appear for certain until the Fourth Dynasty, though possibly near the end of the Third Dynasty. From the Fourth Dynasty, however, her continued importance for royalty in this world, especially queens, throughout pharaonic history, remains indisputable. She was initially understood to be the deity represented by the bovine heads on the top of both the recto and verso of the Narmer Palette and on the king's skirt on its recto. The recognition of Bat as the deity with priests and priestesses in the 7th nome of Upper Egypt, the neighboring nome to Hathor's 6th nome, in the early 1960s, however, should have put the idea that this figure was Hathor to rest. Unfortunately it did not, for even in the current millennium, we find those heads still occasionally referred to as Bat. This continued identification is the more curious since studies of the iconographic representations of the two deities, as discussed both in the chapter on Hathor and in the following excursus on Bat, show that the two figures present very differently: the horns that surmount Bat curve sharply inward, while those on Hathor are long and always curve gently outward, often described as lyriiform. Hence this discussion also includes a second brief excursus

on cattle to further illuminate possible origins for the deities. I suggest that Bat has a celestial meaning, quite notably because some of her earliest iconography includes significant numbers of stars: two on her ears, two on her horn tips, and one on her forehead, this latter perhaps the forerunner of the sun disk between Hathor's horns.

The meaning of Hathor's name similarly has proven contentious, as several possibilities exist, and each makes sense. One suggestion, proposed in the 1950s, however, has generally been overlooked: the possibility that it derives from an actual physical House of Horus, a building that may have served as the gathering place for village or group leaders to acclaim their king, that is, the successor to the previous king, and eventually, perhaps, a space in which to celebrate his accession and even later his renewal. Recent archaeological work on the earliest history and especially the prehistory of ancient Egypt in both Lower and Upper Egypt has opened up new possibilities, particularly concerning the nature of the so-called unification of Egypt, that is, the joining together under a unified leadership of the geographical area between the Delta and Aswan at the First Cataract of the Nile. The results of this recent work—which is continuing—has been presented at conferences and then published not only in many reports and monographs but most particularly at the five Origins conferences held beginning in 2000, all very helpful for continuing to work on the issues presented in this volume.

Especially significant to this discussion is the work that has been done in Hierakonpolis, the location in Upper Egypt where the Narmer Palette was discovered in the late nineteenth century, and where there have been significant findings made regarding social hierarchy, major celebrations, and the prominence of the hawk, the symbol of Horus. Furthermore, this location is well known as a

major stop on the king's journey around the country. I have suggested in this discussion that personnel who served in the celebratory area at Hierakonpolis might in time have become priestesses and priests of the House of Horus as divinized in understanding the possible origin of Hathor.

The goddess Nut—the focus of a monograph published in German in the 1920s and of a more recent and extensive dissertation about her in relation to the tree of life—has received little study until very recently, save the occasional article related to her astronomical form. Notably in the last two decades of the twentieth century, several astronomers took an interest in looking at Nut in relation to the Milky Way, *mskt*. Considering the ancient Egyptians' close observation of their natural environment, including the sky and its constellations, particularly those of the Milky Way, seeing in it a woman giving birth to these constellations, and their component stars at different times of the year, provides a plausible analogy to the death and rebirth of the individual in the next world, a cycle that is depicted on the ceilings of several Twentieth Dynasty kings. Understanding Nut in this fashion thus makes clear from what her role in the mortuary world derived and accounts for her presence as the most cited goddess in the Pyramid Texts. She represents the celestial journey for the deceased to and during his or her life in the next world.

The sisters Isis and Nephthys, the latest of these goddesses to appear, essentially functioned as a pair, enabling the care and preparation of the deceased for their new life in the next world, a role commonly filled by pairs of women in traditional societies the world over. That two women carry out this role in ancient Egypt is thus not surprising, and although we see the preparation of the bier itself for the deceased most commonly carried out by males, it is females who accompany the coffin to the burial

and mourn the deceased. Initially lacking any kind of epithet, eventually these women became identified as *Drty*-figures and commonly appear depicted on the front and back of the catafalques shown on the funerary boats and other related transport vehicles in the procession to the actual burial. Not uncommonly shown with them is a male figure identified as *wt*, the embalmer, who is later identified with the canid god Anubis. With the identification of *Drty*-birds as falcons, that is, carrion eaters, which worked alongside Anubis, also a carrion eater, who oversaw the preparations of the deceased for their new life, we find figures who work with the deceased to generate new and continued life. Thus the understanding that the two deities played a part in the preparation for the rebirth of the deceased easily led to the sisters' epithet as *Drty*-birds.

Significantly, the pair continued to function together up into the Graeco-Roman Period as evidenced by the "Lamentations of Isis and Nephthys," as well as several other documents. Isis, of course, played a major role as the wife of Osiris, with whom she posthumously engendered Osiris's successor, Horus. Nephthys, however, tends to fall into the background, having been identified at least once as a "shadow goddess." But a recent dissertation on her, with special reference to the Graeco-Roman Period, suggests she attained more visibility in this much later period, a finding that hopefully will engender further exploration of her and her role.

Clearly there is much food for thought and for possible debate in this book. I look forward to hearing from readers as I continue working to clarify these important figures in ancient Egyptian culture as well as perhaps challenging others to think about deities and their beginnings in other cultures.

Abbreviations

AA	Archaeoastronomy
AAR	African Archaeological Review
ÄAT	Ägypten und Altes Testaments: Studien zur Geschichte, Kultur und Religion Ägyptens und des Alten Testaments
ACE Reports	Australian Centre for Egyptology Reports
ACE Studies	Australian Centre for Egyptology Studies
Acta. Univ. Ups.	Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis
AE	Adolf Erman, trans. A. Blackman, <i>The Ancient Egyptians</i> .
ÄeA	Ägyptologische Abhandlungen
AEL	Miriam Lichtheim, <i>Ancient Egyptian Literature</i> , 3 vols.
AfO	Archiv für Orientforschung.
AKM	Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes.
ANET3	James B. Pritchard, ed., <i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the Old Testament</i> , 3rd ed.
An.Or.	Analecta Orientalia
ASAE	Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte
ASE Mem.	Archaeological Survey of Egypt: Memoir
AVDAIK	Archäologische Veröffentlichungen, Deutschen Archäologisches Institut, Abteilung Kairo
BA	Biblical Archaeologist
BAe	Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca
BAR	British Archaeological Reports
BAR IS	British Archaeological Reports International Series
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of

BBf	Oriental Research Beiträge zur ägyptischen Bauforschung und Altertumskunde
BD	Book of the Dead
BdÉ	Bibliothèque d'Étude
BEHE	Bibliothèque de l'École des hautes études sciences historiques et philologiques
BES	Bulletin of the Egyptological Seminar
BIFAO	Bulletin de l'Institut français d'Archéologie orientale
BiOr	Bibliotheca Orientalis
BMBeyr	Bulletin du Musée de Beyrouth
BMMA	Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art
BOREAS	Boreas: Uppsala Studies in Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern Civilisations
BSEG	Bulletin de la Société d'Égyptologie Genève
BTAVO	Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des vorderen Orients
CAJ	Cambridge Archaeological Journal
CCdE	Les Cahiers Caribéens d'Égyptologie
CD	R. O Faulkner, <i>A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian</i>
CRAIBL	Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres
CRIPEL	Cahier de Recherches de l'Institut de Papyrologie et d'Égyptologie
CSEG	Cahiers de la Société d'Égyptologie, Genève
CT	Coffin Texts
DAWW	Denkschriften der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Phil.-hist. Kl.
DE	Discussions in Egyptology
EES OP	EES Occasional Publications
EPRO	Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain
ERA	Egyptian Research Account
Evol. Anthropol.	Evolutionary Anthropology
GM	Göttinger Miszellen
GMas	Giza Mastabas

GÖF	Göttinger Orientforschungen
HES	Harvard Egyptological Studies
HO	Handbuch der Orientalistik
IÄF	Peter Kaplony, <i>Inschriften des Ägyptischen Frühzeits</i>
JA EI	Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections
J. Anthro. Archaeol.	Journal of Anthropological Archaeology
JARCE	Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt
JEA	Journal of Egyptian Archaeology
JESHO	Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies.
J. World Prehist.	Journal of World Prehistory
KAW	Kulturgeschichte der Antiken Welt
Kemi	Kêmi: Revue de philologie et d'archéologie égyptienne et coptes
KMT	KMT: A Modern Journal of Ancient Egypt
KSG	Königtum, Staat und Gesellschaft früher Hochkulturen
LdÄ	Lexikon der Ägyptologie.
LES	Alan H. Gardiner, <i>Late Egyptian Stories</i> , BAel.
LingAeg SM	Lingua Aegyptia—Studia monographica
MÄS	Münchener Ägyptologische Studien
MDAIK	Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abt. Kairo
MEEF	Memoir of the Egypt Exploration Fund
MENES	MENES: Studien zur Kultur und Sprache der ägyptischen Frühzeit und des Alten Reiches
MIFAO	Memoires publiés par les Membres de l'Institut français d'Archéologie orientale du Caire
MIO	Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung
MonAeg	Monumenta Aegyptiaca
MonPiot	Monuments et Mémoires publiés par l'Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-

MVEOL	Letters, Foundation Eugène Piot Mededelingen en Verhandelingen Ex Oriente Lux
NAWG	Nachrichten von der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Phil.-hist. Kl.
NEA	Near Eastern Archaeology
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OCMA	Oxford Centre for Maritime Archaeology
OEAE	The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
OLP	Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica
OLZ	Orientalistische Literaturzeitung
OMRO	Oudheidkundige Mededeelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden te Leiden
PdÄ Philippika	Probleme der Ägyptologie Philippika: Marburger altertumskundliche Abhandlungen
PIREI	Publications Interuniversitaires de Recherches Égyptologiques Informatisées
PSBA	Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology
PT	Pyramid Texts
Pyr.	Kurt Sethe, <i>Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte</i>
Pyr.Über.	Kurt Sethe, <i>Übersetzungen und Kommentar zu den altägyptischen Pyramidentexten</i> , 6 vols.
Quat Int.	Quaternary International
Quaternary RES	Quaternary Research
RAI OP	Royal Anthropological Institute Occasional Paper
RÄRG	Hans Bonnet, <i>Reallexikon der ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte</i>
RdÉ	Revue d'Égyptologie
RHR	Revue de l'Histoire de Religions
SAA	Studies in African Archaeology
SAK	Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur
SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental

SHR	Civilizations
Sp	Studies in the History of Religion
SPAW	Speisetisch = Offering Table
	Sitzungsberichte der Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil.-hist. Kl.
St.	Stela = upright inscribed monument
StudAeg	Studia Aegyptiaca
TAVO	Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients
Urk. I	Urkunden I, Urkunden des Altens Reichs
USE	Uppsala Studies in Egyptology
Utt.	Utterance
WAW	Writings from the Ancient World
Wb	Adolf Erman and H. Grapow, <i>Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache</i>
YES	Yale Egyptological Studies
ZÄS	Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Alterstumkunde
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentilich Wissenschaft
ZDMG	Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft

Notes

Chronology

1

Given there is no agreement among Egyptologists on dates for the first two millennia of Egyptian history, the dates here represent a compilation and referencing from a number of sources, notably Donald B. Redford and Donald B. Spägel, eds., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, 3 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), back endpaper; John Baines and Jaromír Málek, *Cultural Atlas of Ancient Egypt*, rev. ed. (New York: Checkmark Books, 2000), 36–7; and Erik Hornung, Rolf Krauss, and David A. Warburton, “Chronological Table for the Dynastic Period,” in *Ancient Egyptian Chronology*, ed. Erik Hornung, Rolf Krauss, and David A. Warburton, *Handbook of Oriental Studies, Section One: The Near and Middle East* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006), 490–5. See also Jürgen von Beckerath, *Handbuch der ägyptischen Königsnamen*, ed. Günter Burkhard and Dieter Kessler, 2nd ed., *Münchener Ägyptologische Studien* (Mainz am Rhine: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1999), 36–65. Further, because of the uncertainty of the specific kings’ dates, I present simply the order in which they are generally, though not always, understood to have ruled and only through the end of the Sixth Dynasty. The discussion of chronology in the first volume of *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* will help elucidate the question, xi.

2

BCE stands for Before the Common Era (replacing BC, Before Christ) while CE stands for Common Era (replacing AD, In the Year of Our Lord).

Acknowledgments

1

George A. Reisner, *The Early Dynastic Cemeteries of Naga-Ed-Dêr*, Part I, University of California Publications (Lepzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1908), pl. 6, #2, pl. 9, #1.

2

Émile Vernier, *Catalogue Général des Antiquités Égyptiennes du Musée du*

Caire, Nos 52001–53855: Bijoux et Orfèvreries, vol. 1, texte, fasc. 4 (Cairo: Imperierie de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1927), 510, and more recently in Cyril Aldred, *Jewels of the Pharaohs: Egyptian Jewelry of the Dynastic Period* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), pl. 2, and with the same plate number in the abridged edition by Ballentine Books in 1978.

Introduction

1

This early paper was published initially as Susan Tower Hollis, “Women of Ancient Egypt and the Sky Goddess Nut,” *Journal of American Folklore* 100, no. 398 (1987), and in revised form in Susan Tower Hollis, “Ancient Egyptian Women and the Sky Goddess Nut,” in *Feminist Theory and the Study of Folklore*, ed. Susan Tower Hollis, Linda Pershing, and M. Jane Young (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 200–18, having been first presented at the Annual Meeting, American Folklore Society, Baltimore, MD, October 24, 1986.

2

Susan Tower Hollis, “Five Goddesses in the Third Millennium BC,” *KMT: A Modern Journal of Ancient Egypt* 5, no. 4 (1994); Susan Tower Hollis, “Queens and Goddesses in Ancient Egypt,” in *Women and Goddess Traditions in Antiquity and Today*, ed. Karen L. King (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997); Susan Tower Hollis, “Isis,” in *Encyclopedia of Women and World Religion*, ed. Serenity Young (New York: Macmillan Reference, 1999); Susan Tower Hollis, “Neith,” in *Encyclopedia of Women and World Religion*, ed. Serenity Young (New York: Macmillan Reference, 1999); Susan Tower Hollis, “Goddesses and Sovereignty in Ancient Egypt,” in *Goddesses Who Rule*, ed. Elisabeth Benard and Beverly Moon (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Susan Tower Hollis, “Isis,” in *Gale Encyclopedia of Sex and Gender*, ed. Fedwa Malti-Douglas (New York: Thomson Gale, 2007); Susan Tower Hollis, “Hathor and Isis in Byblos in the Second and First Millennia BCE,” *JAIE* 1, no. 2 (2009): 1–8; Susan Tower Hollis, “Nut: An Ancient Egyptian Sky and Mortuary Goddess,” *Boyer Revisited: Exploring the Scholarly Work of Empire State College Faculty* 1 (2011); Susan Tower Hollis, “Journeys with Goddesses and More,” *JAIE* 4, no. 4 (2012); Susan Tower Hollis, “Hathor, Mistress of Byblos,” in *Tenth International Congress of Egyptologists, University of the Aegean, Rhodes 22–29 May 2008*, ed. Panagiotis Kousoulis and Nikolaos Lazaridis (Leuven: Peeters, 2015); Susan Tower Hollis, “The Lamentations of Isis and Nephthys,” in *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Ancient Mediterranean Religions*, ed. Eric Orlin, et al. (New York: Routledge, 2016).

3

Reginald Eldred Witt, *Isis in the Ancient World* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 14.

4

Because the majority of texts I use belong to males, with those of any queen used rarely, I will use the masculine pronoun for general discussion, using the feminine only when the text relates to a queen in particular.

5

John Baines, "Modeling Sources, Processes, and Locations of Early Mortuary Texts," in *D'un monde à l'autre Textes des Pyramides & Textes des Sarcophages. Actes de la table ronde internationale "Textes des Pyramides versus Textes des Sarcophages" Ifao—24–26 Septembre 2001*, ed. Susanne Bickel and Bernard Mathieu (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 2004), 31, 40–1; Antonio J. Morales, "From Voice to Papyrus to Wall: *Verschriftung* and *Verschriftlichung* in the Old Kingdom Pyramid Texts," in *Understanding Material Text Cultures: A Multidisciplinary View*, ed. Markus Hilgert (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2016), 72–9.

6

Leonard H. Lesko, "Funerary Literature," *OEA* 1: 570.

7

Harold M. Hays makes a useful distinction between mortuary and funerary, stating that "funerary" refers to what concerns the actual materials and practices related to the day the deceased is buried, while "mortuary" refers to the same things relating to the deceased, him- or herself. Harold M. Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts: Typology and Disposition* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 2, n. 5. His distinction, however, omits the fact that much occurs related to the burial that does not happen on the day of the burial itself, such as tending to the deceased in preparation for burial. See also Baines, "Modeling Sources," 32–3.

8

James P. Allen, "Préface," in *Textes des Pyramides de l'Égypte, Tome I: Textes des Pyramides d'Ounas et de Têti*, ed. Claude Carrier (Paris: Éditions Cybele, 2009), xxix. The commonly accepted date for the Greco-Roman Period begins with Alexander the Great in 332 BCE.

9

Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts*, 258–9.

10

Morales, "From Voice to Papyrus to Wall," 108–9.

11

Susanne Bickel, "Everybody's Afterlife? 'Pharaonisation' in the Pyramid Texts," in *Studies in Ancient Egyptian Funerary Literature*, ed. Susanne Bickel and Lucía Díaz-Iglesias (Paris: Peeters, 2017), 119–48. She provides a very recent discussion of issues around the possible origins of the Pyramid Texts which, while addressing much of what follows in

this discussion, came too late to be fully incorporated in it. See also Morales, “From Voice to Papyrus to Wall,” 79–96.

12

Baines, “Modeling Sources,” 28. See also Morales, “From Voice to Papyrus to Wall.”

13

Baines, “Modeling Sources,” 17; Morales, “From Voice to Papyrus to Wall,” 109–18.

14

Morales, “From Voice to Papyrus to Wall,” 96–100.

15

Baines, “Modeling Sources,” 28.

16

Baines, “Modeling Sources,” 32.

17

Baines, “Modeling Sources,” 30.

18

Morales, “From Voice to Papyrus to Wall,” 108, suggests “the Memphite priests of Wenis” prepared the corpus of texts for the pyramid. “Wenis” is a variant translation of the hieroglyphs.

19

Issues in copying texts, of any kind, but notably ancient and medieval texts, include the following: omission, addition, transposition, and alteration, and is termed “scribal error.” For more on definitions of such alterations, see Stephen R. Reimer, “Scribal Error,” *Manuscript Studies: Medieval and Early Modern*. For discussion of the ancient Egyptians and the Pyramid Texts specifically, see Baines, “Modeling Sources,” 26, and Morales, “From Voice to Papyrus to Wall,” 96–100.

20

As the hieroglyphic text shows, the name of the recipient, that is the king, is simply missing although it is clearly present in Pepi II’s text of the same spell, the only one available with that section fully visible. For the hieroglyphic text, see James P. Allen, *A New Concordance for the Pyramid Texts*, 2nd ed. (Providence, RI: Brown University, 2013).

21

James P. Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, ed. Peter Der Manuelian (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 35. See 66, n. 37, where Allen observes that “WHOEVER” represents a place in the original text where the deceased’s name should have been inserted but was not.

22

Each major spell has a number by which it is referred to in the scholarship. This citation is arranged as PT (Pyramid Text), with the following § or §§ indicating the specific part of the spell under

discussion. This numbering system comes from the initial work carried out by Kurt Sethe, the renowned Egyptologist, beginning in 1908. See Kurt Sethe, *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte*, 4 vols. (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1969). Many scholars have worked on these texts since then, and there is now a new concordance in open access form, including both the known hieroglyphic occurrences from every known pyramid as well as transliterations of these hieroglyphs, noting the pyramids in which they occur and showing variances in both the hieroglyphs and the transliterations, for which see Allen's magisterial work of transliterations of the known Pyramid texts in volume 1 of *A New Concordance of the Pyramid Texts*, online resource. My own presentations and translations of the many Pyramid Text utterances in this volume make extensive use of Allen's *Concordance* and his *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*. I also consulted the following translations of the texts: Claude Carrier, *Textes des Pyramides de l'Égypte ancienne*, 6 vols. (Paris: Édition Cybele, 2009–10), especially the first two volumes; and R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (Warminster, UK: Aris & Phillips Ltd., 1986), and R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts Translated into English: Supplement of Hieroglyphic Texts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

23

Interestingly, despite the numerous extant texts known from ancient Egypt and the many more likely lost, a very small percentage of the population would have been considered literate, depending on time and place. The form of the various texts, even as exemplified in this discussion of the Pyramid Texts, clearly demonstrates they were delivered orally.

24

Emily Teeter, *Religion and Ritual in Ancient Egypt* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 39–53; Françoise Dunand and Christiane Zivie-Coche, *Gods and Men in Egypt: 3000 BCE to 395 CE*, trans. David Lorton (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), 83–93; Erik Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many*, trans. John Baines (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982), 135–8.

25

For a full discussion of these concepts, see Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts*, 10.

26

Brent Nongbri, *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), especially chapter 2.

1

Dominique Mallet, *Le Culte de Neit à Saïs* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, Editeur, 1888), is the only monograph devoted specifically to Neith prior to Ramadan el-Sayed's two-volume work, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, 2 vols. (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire, 1982). El-Sayed's first volume provides discussion, while the second is devoted to documents. He also published *Documents relatifs à Saïs et ses divinités*, vol. 69 (Cairo: Institute français d'archéologie orientale du Caire, 1975), an earlier work on deities, including Neith in the northwest delta town of Saïs.

2

Stan Hendrickx, "Two Protodynastic Objects in Brussels and the Origin of the Bilobate Cult-Sign of Neith," *JEA* 82 (1996): 34.

3

Egyptian writing, also known as hieroglyphs or hieroglyphic writing ("hieroglyphics" as a noun is incorrect), first appeared as ideograms and as phonograms around 3200 BCE. An ideogram presents a recognizable object, for example, a house or a tree, while the phonogram represents concepts or ideas using individual hieroglyphs to spell out the word by sound. Then to distinguish homophones, the many words that sound the same (for example, in English, "red" and "read"), the ancient Egyptian scribes used an ideogram to help. Thus the pictured object written at the end of a collection of individual signs served to define them into the desired concept. For a more complete introduction to the writing of ancient Egypt, see Orly Goldwasser, "Hieroglyphs," in *OEAE*, ed. Donald B. Redford (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 198–204, and/or James P. Allen, *Middle Egyptian: An Introduction to the Language and Culture of Hieroglyphs*, 3rd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), Self-Teaching Grammar, lesson 1.

4

A majority of scholars today consider the Old Kingdom as beginning with the Third Dynasty, in some senses a hangover from the nineteenth century, when early Egyptologists were essentially unaware of the Early Dynastic Period, and I continue to see the Third Dynasty as an appropriate beginning for the Old Kingdom for a number of reasons. It is where we find the first stone pyramid built by its first king, Djoser/Netjerykhet, the so-called Step Pyramid at Saqqara, and during this dynasty, we find the beginnings of various features of the ancient Egyptian state, and quite notably both the writing system was reformed and the "sculpture and bas reliefs [present during this time] marked an important turning point in the evolution of Egyptian art" as Jochem Kahl, "Old Kingdom: Third Dynasty," in *OEAE*, ed. Donald B. Redford (New York: Oxford University Press), vol. 2, 592, notes. Nevertheless, we

still find some scholars stating the Old Kingdom begins with the Fourth Dynasty; for example, Erik Hornung, Rolf Krauss, and David A. Warburton, “Chronological Table for the Dynastic Period,” in *Ancient Egyptian Chronology*, ed. Erik Hornung, Rolf Krauss, and David A. Warburton, Handbook of Oriental Studies, Section One: The Near and Middle East (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 490, and John Baines and Jaromir Málek, *Cultural Atlas of Ancient Egypt*, rev. ed. (New York: Checkmark Books, 2000), 36–7.

5

Hendrickx, “Two Protodynastic Objects,” 39.

6

W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Diospolis Parva: The Cemeteries of Abadiyeh and Hu 1898–9* (London: Egyptian Exploration Fund, 1901), pl. 20, nos. 9 and 11 provide fine examples of such sealings from a provenanced source.

7

Ludwig Keimer, “Pendeloques en forme d’insectes faisant partie de colliers égyptiens,” *ASAÉ* 31 (1931): 149–52.

8

Hendrickx, “Two Protodynastic Objects,” 35. My own research on the so-called shield in Egyptian iconography, when compared to the reality of matching arrows with a shield, shows, first, that nowhere in Egyptian iconography does a shield in such form exist, and, second, that fighting (or even hunting) with a shield and arrows cannot be done. The arrows and bow necessary to deliver them require using two hands, leaving none to hold a shield; then, in order to use the arrows, one hand holds the bow while the other holds the arrow notched on the string and pulls it back for delivery. Further, the beetle part of this sign tends to morph into a shield-type background in the course of its use through Egyptian history. On its use throughout Egyptian history, see el-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, vol. 1, 16.

9

Hendrickx, “Two Protodynastic Objects,” 26, 39–40. A personal communication from Stan Hendrickx, July 18, 2017, indicates that an additional fragment has been found by the German excavations that confirm this figure refers to Neith; for additional discussion, see Ann Macy Roth, “Objects, Animals, Humans, and Hybrids: The Evolution of Early Egyptian Representations of the Divine,” in *Dawn of Egyptian Art*, ed. Diana Craig Patch (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011), 199–200, cat. no. 180; and Barbara Adams, “Dish of Delight and Coleoptera,” in *Studies on Ancient Egypt in Honour of H. S. Smith*, ed. Anthony Leahy and John Tait (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1999), 5–7; Hendrickx, “Two Protodynastic Objects,” 23–8 with figures. 1 and 2 for a more detailed discussion of this object.

10

El-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, vol. 2, 228, doc. 78; Hendrickx, "Two Protodynastic Objects," 39.

11

El-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, vol. 2, 72–6; Hans Bonnet, *Reallexikon der ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte* (RÄRG) (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1952), 513; Catherine Simon, "Neith," in *OEA*, vol. 2, 516. I would note that hunting was a very ancient activity and in later times very much a prestige activity. For more discussion, see Eberhard Otto, "An Ancient Egyptian Hunting Ritual," *JNES* 9, no. 3 (1950).

12

Toby A. H. Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt* (London: Routledge, 1999), 70, 74–5.

13

Silke Roth, *Die Königsmütter des Alten Ägypten von der Frühzeit bis zum Ende der 12. Dynastie*, ed. Manfred Görg (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 2001), 19–21, abb. 13.

14

Wilfried Seipel, "Untersuchungen zu den Ägyptischen Königinnen der Frühzeit und des Alten Reiches: Quellen und Historische Einordnung," doctoral dissertation (Hamburg, 1980), 8–45; Lana Troy, *Patterns of Queenship in Ancient Egyptian Myth and History*, ed. Rostislav Holthoer and Tullia Linders (Uppsala, Sweden: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis Boreas, 1986), 152.

15

Peter Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der Ägyptischen Frühzeit*, ed. Wolfgang Helck and Eberhard Otto, 3 vols. (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1963), vol. 3, Taf. with drawings of seals, 495, 1183, abb. 730; Walter Emery, *Great Royal Tombs of the First Dynasty* (London: Egyptian Exploration Society, 1954), vol. 2, 169, #2.

16

Troy, *Patterns of Queenship*, 139, 1.7.

17

Jean-Philippe Lauer, "Quelques remarques sur la 1^{re} dynastie," *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale* 64 (1964): 176, nn. 5 and 6; T. A. H. Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, 74; Roth, *Die Königsmütter des Alten Ägypten*, 18–26, 380–1.

18

I suggest the possibility that Meret-Neith might be the first known example of a co-ruler, such as those seen in later dynasties, notably the Twelfth.

19

See particularly Kaplony, *Inschriften*, 588–92.

20

Pierre Tallet, "Sur la fondation de la ville de Memphis au début de l'histoire pharaonique. De nouvelles données au Ouadi 'Ameïra (Sud-Sinaï) (Note d'information)," *Compte rendus (de séances) de l'académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* 4 (November–December 2012): 1652; Pierre Tallet, *La Zone Minière Pharaonique du Sud-Sinaï-II: Les Inscriptions pré- et protodynastiques du Ouadi 'Ameïra* (CCIS Nos 273–335) (Cairo: l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 2015), 28–9, pl. 37.

21

Roth, *Die Königsmütter des Alten Ägypten*, 31–5.

22

Troy, *Patterns of Queenship*, 106, 115, 116.

23

Roth, *Die Königsmütter des Alten Ägypten*, 307–9, with references particularly in n. 1704.

24

Irene Silverblatt, *Moon, Sun, and Witches: Gender Ideologies and Class in Inca and Colonial Peru* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), chapter 3.

25

Troy, *Patterns of Queenship*, 14, 133; George A. Reisner and William Stevenson Smith, *A History of the Giza Necropolis II: The Tomb of Hetep-Heres the Mother of Cheops. A Study of Egyptian Civilization in the Old Kingdom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955), figure 32.

26

Seipel, "Ägyptischen Königinnen," 10; Troy, *Patterns of Queenship*, 152.

27

Troy, *Patterns of Queenship*, 152; Aidan Dodson and Dyan Hilton, *The Complete Royal Families of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 45, 49; Darrell D. Baker, *The Encyclopedia of the Egyptian Pharaohs. Volume I: Predynastic through Twentieth Dynasty* (Oakville, CT: Bannerstone Press, 2008), 79, 95; "Editorial Forward," *JEA* 42 (December 1956).

28

Benjamin R. Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 2005), 525–30.

29

Rainer Stadelmann, "Königinnengrab und Pyramidenbezirk im Alten Reich," *ASAÉ* 71 (1987).

30

Edward F. Wente, Jr., "The Contendings of Horus and Seth," in *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies, and Poetry*, ed. William Kelly Simpson (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003). See el-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, vol. 1,

63 §17, vol. 2, 374, doc. 86. For a very recent and detailed discussion of this narrative, see Michèle Broze, *Les Aventures d'Horus et Seth dans le Papyrus Chester Beatty I* (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters Leuven, 1997).

31

“The Contendings of Horus and Seth” appears on the Twentieth Dynasty Chester Beatty Papyrus I, discussed by el-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, vol. 1, 63 §17; vol. 2, 374, doc. 386. In addition, el-Sayed discusses her as kingmaker on 98, §8.

32

Esna has burials dating from the Middle Kingdom and shows use through the end of Egyptian pharaonic history.

33

Serge Sauneron, *Les Fêtes religieuses d'Esna aux derniers siècles de paganisme* (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire, 1962), vol. 5, 112, §8 (330, 3). The translations from his French translation of the hieroglyphic texts are mine, with comparison to the hieroglyphic text as well.

34

Kaplony, *Inschriften*, 624, abb. 524, Taf. 197; el-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, vol. 2, 218, doc. 38.

35

El-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, vol. 1, 3, vol. 2, 227, pl. II, doc. 76.

36

See Jochem Kahl, *Ra Is My Lord: Searching for the Rise of the Sun God at the Dawn of Egyptian History*, ed. Eva-Maria Engel and Jochem Kahl (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007), 62.

37

Siegfried Schott, “Ein Kult der Göttin Neith,” *BbF* 8 (1969): 126, nn. 12 and 14, figures. 15a and 16a; el-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, 227, doc. 77; Raymond Weill, *Recherches sur la Ire dynastie et les temps prépharaoniques, Partie 1re*, BdÉ 38 (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1961), pt. I, 348.

38

Alessandro Bongioanni and Maria Sole Croce, eds., *The Illustrated Guide to the Egyptian Museum* (Cairo: American University Cairo Press, 2001), 31, 582; Mohamed Saleh and Hourig Sourouzian, *The Egyptian Museum, Cairo: Official catalogue* trans. Peter Der Manuelian and Helen Jacquet-Gordon (Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1987), 43, #20; James Edward Quibell, “Stone Vessels from the Step Pyramid,” *ASAÉ* 34 (1934): 72.

39

Marc Jeremy LeBlanc, “‘In Accordance with the Documents of Ancient Times’: The Origins, Development, and Significance of the Ancient Egyptian Sed Festival (Jubilee Festival),” Ph.D. diss. (Yale University,

2011); Alejandro Jiménez Serrano, *Royal Festivals of the Late Predynastic Period and the First Dynasty* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2002), 42–78.

40

Erik Hornung and Elisabeth Staehelin, *Neue Studien zum Sedfest, Aegyptiaca Helvetica* (Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 2006), 9–12; Patrick O'Mara, "Dating the Sed Fest: was there only a single model?" *GM* 136 (1993).

41

Dorthea Arnold and Elena Pischikova, "Stone Vessels: Luxury Items with Manifold Implications," in *Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids*, ed. Dorthea Arnold, Krzysztof Grzymski, and Christiane Ziegler (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999), 125.

42

Jean-Philippe Lauer, "Fouilles du service des antiquités à Saqqarah: (Secteur Nord) (Novembre 1932–Mai 1933)," *ASAÉ* 34 (1934). The reasons for Neith's association with the click beetle remain a matter of speculation; however, both the Arabic and English names of the beetle clearly derive from the clicking sound it makes when, lying on its back, it rises up, jumping, to land on its feet. It also prefers watery environments, such as the shores of lakes and rivers from which it has the ability to remove itself through the jumping maneuver when necessary. Since water is critical to life and particularly so in the climate of Egypt, this adaptation might be related to the very welcome annual flood, a positive occurrence for even the most ordinary Egyptian. Why such behavior would lend itself to its identification with Neith remains an enigma however. Various suggestions have been made, with much discussion of her relation to water, most notably the Great Flood, *Mḥt-wrt*, for which see more below, that might shed some light on the situation. Perhaps important to this question is the note that certain members of this beetle family are luminous, emitting a bright light by means of special organs that have a light-producing outer layer and a reflective inner layer. See Judson Linsley Gressitt, "Coleoptera," in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Macropaedia,, Knowledge in Depth*, ed. Phillip W. Goetz (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1985), 656. Keimer suggested that this luminosity may have led to the beetle's use as decoration, leading eventually to the gaining of religious significance, and finally resulting in imitation of it in gold, stone, and faience (ceramic). He has also indicated that the varied examples of the click beetle were intended to provide the possessor of them with the favor of Neith. That we know so little about exactly why this beetle was important derives from the fact that we do not know the name given the beetle by the ancient Egyptians themselves, unlike the scarab beetle, which appears somewhat later and is well known as the *ḥpr*-beetle. See Keimer, "Pendeloques en

forme d'insectes," 173, 159, 174; and Hendrickx, "Two Protodynastic Objects," 36–7, 40–2.

43

W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Naqada and Ballas* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1895), 43–4, pl. LII, #75.

44

Gerald Averay Wainwright, "The Red Crown in Early Prehistoric Times," *JEA* 9 (1923): 28.

45

Eva Jelínková, "Recherches sur le titre *Hrp hwwt Nt* 'Administrateur des domaines de la couronne rouge,'" *ASAÉ* 50 (1950): 326–8; Ramadan el-Sayed, "A Propos du Titre *hrp-hwwt*," *RdÉ* 28 (1976): 98–9.

46

Herbert Ricke, "Dritter Grabungsbericht über das Sonnenheiligtum des Königs Userkaf bei Abusir," *ASAÉ* 55, fasc. 1 (1958). See also Schott, "Ein Kult der Göttin Neith," 123–5. It is important to note that the concept of Neith as the mother of the sun god came considerably later than the early period.

47

Edward L. B. Terrace and Henry G. Fischer, *Treasures of Egyptian Art from the Cairo Museum: A Centennial Exhibition 1970–71* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1970), 53; Rainer Stadelmann, *Die ägyptischen Pyramiden vom Ziegelbau zum Weltwunder*, 3, aktualisierte und erweiterte ed. (Mainz am Rhine: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1997), Taf. 62; Jaromir Málek and Werner Foreman, *In the Shadow of the Pyramids: Egypt During the Old Kingdom* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986), 92–3; Saleh and Sourouzian, *The Egyptian Museum, Cairo: Official catalogue* 34–5, #35; Bongioanni and Croce, *Illustrated Guide to the Egyptian Museum*, 55, 584, JE 90220.

48

Jean-Philippe and Jean Leclant Lacau, *La Pyramid à Degrés, vol IV: Inscriptions gravées sur les vases*, 2nd fasc. *Texts* (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire, 1959), 77; el-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, 227, doc. 76 and pl. II.

49

Gaston Maspero, "Sur le pyramidion d'Amenemhaît III à Dahchour," *ASAÉ* 3 (1902): 207.

50

Kurt Sethe, "Der Name der Göttin Neith," *ZÄS* 43 (1906); Adolf Erman and Hermann Grapow, *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache* (Wb), 4th ed. (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1982), vol. 2, 198, #9; Siegfried Morenz, *Egyptian Religion*, trans. Ann E. Keep (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1973), 23. See also Abad el Monem Joussef Abubakr, *Untersuchungen über die ägyptischen Kronen* (New York: Verlag von J. J.

Augustin, 1937), 54, 56. Jelínková observes that the first examples of confusion between the Red Crown hieroglyph and Neith's identifying signs appear in the Twenty-First Dynasty. Jelínková, "Recherches sur le titre *hrp-hwwt Nt*," 323.

51

See Elmar Edel, *Altägyptische Grammatik*, vol. 1 (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1955), §§125–8.

52

This assessment represents my count from Kaplony. Considerable challenges exist in reading these early writings, and so different translations of the names and offices abound.

53

Bonnet, RÄRG, 513; Hendrickx, "Two Protodynastic Objects," 34. See also Susan Tower Hollis, "The Goddess Neith in Ancient Egypt through the End of the Third Millennium BC," presentation, Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion (Boston, MA, 1987).

54

Barbara L. Begelsbacher-Fischer, *Untersuchungen zur Götterwelt des Alten Reiches in Spiegel der Privatgräber der IV und V Dynastie*, vol. 37, OBO (Freiberg: Universitätsverlag & Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981), 116.

55

El-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, vol. 2, 231, pl. III, doc. 91. Kaplony, *Inschriften*, 459, St. 57. "St." refers to the German "Stele" (stele/ stela), which is an upright, inscribed stone slab, generally commemorating a person or action.

56

For the sources of these names and related references, see el-Sayed *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, vol. 2, 209–38.

57

See, for example, Bonnet, RÄRG, 513; Robert Schlichting, "Neith," in *LdÄ*, vol. 4, ed. Wolfgang Helck and Wolfhart Westendorf (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1980), 392.

58

Morenz, *Egyptian Religion*, 233; el-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, vol. 1, 72–3.

59

W. M. Flinders Petrie, *The Royal Tombs of the First Dynasty I*, MEEF (London: Offices of The Egypt Exploration Fund, 1900), pl. 31, #10; Weill, *Recherches sur la 1^{re} dynastie*, 136; Kaplony, *Inschriften*, 509, St. 10; el-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, doc. 100.

60

El-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, vol. 2, 209–38.; Simon, "Neith," 516.

61

Alan H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 3rd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 526; Ilona Regulski, *A Palaeographic Study of Early Writing in Egypt*, (Paris: Uitgeverij Peeters and Departement Oosterse Studies, 2010), 203, 688. While Gardiner's main discussion of V 32 focuses largely on "harpooner," his note 3 raises the possibility that the sign is really a determinative of *msn*, to "weave," or to "plait."

62

Petrie, *Naqada and Ballas*, 48–9, pl. LXVI, nos. 5, 9; Petrie, *Diospolis Parva*, pl. XX, 9, 11; W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Prehistoric Egypt* (London: British School of Archaeology in Egypt and Bernard Quaritch, 1920), pl. XXIII, no. 28.

63

The label of Aha from Abydos, at the Penn Museum, is the most complete known to me with similar iconography (it is one of two), "Images for Object E9396," Penn Museum, <https://www.penn.museum/collections/object/122418>. The other one, British Museum, BM 35518, has a top and a bottom section extant. See W. M. Flinders Petrie, *The Royal Tombs of the Earliest Dynasties, 1901, Part II, Extra Plates*, Memoir of the Egypt Exploration Fund (London: Offices of The Egypt Exploration Fund, 1901), pl. IIIA, nos 5 and 6; W. M. Flinders Petrie, *The Royal Tombs of the First Dynasty II*, Memoir of the Egyptian Exploration Fund (London: Offices of The Egypt Exploration Fund, 1901), pl. X, no. 2 and pl. XI, no. 2. See also Wolfgang Helck, *Untersuchungen zur Thinitenzeit*, ÄA (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1987), 147–8.

64

Lisa Mawdsley, "Two Labels of Aha: Evidence of a Pre-Mortuary Administrative Function for First Dynasty Potmarks?" CCdÉ 15 (June 2011): 53, n. 3. She reports discussions that suggest the administrative functions of this material.

65

T. A. H. Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, 220–1; Serrano, *Royal Festivals*, 57–61; Mawdsley, "Two Labels of Aha," 56–7, 62.

66

Begelsbacher-Fischer, *Untersuchungen zur Götterwelt*, 37, 111–20.

67

See examples and discussion at el-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, vol. 1, 183–5.

68

Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2003), 191–2. I recommend this book for basic information on ancient Egyptian deities from all periods.

69

El-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, 67–8, 129.

70

R. H. Wilkinson, *Complete Gods and Goddesses*, 156–9. He provides very short notes on several, but by no means all; and which includes a very helpful chart of royal relatives and ruling elite.

71

Helck, *Thinitenzeit*, 270.

72

Hans Goedicke, “Die Laufbahn des Mtn,” *MDAIK* 21 (1966); el-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, 252, doc. 154.

73

Dilwyn Jones, *An Index of Ancient Egyptian Titles, Epithets, and Phrases of the Old Kingdom* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2000), 930, #3427. See el-Sayed, *Documents relatifs à Saïs et ses divinités*, appendix C, for lists of the various festivals at Saïs, including a number with processions related to Neith.

74

El-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, vol. 1, vol. 2, 164, 243, doc. 126.

75

Peter Kaplony, *Die Rollsiegel des Alten Reichs II: Katalog der Rollsiegel: A. Text; B. Tafeln*, Monumenta Aegyptiaca 3a and 3b (Brussels: Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1981), Taf. 85, 3, 4; and Taf. 97, 29; el-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, vol. 1, 142–3. See also Marianne Galvin, “The Priestesses of Hathor in the Old Kingdom and the 1st Intermediate Period,” Ph.D. diss. (Brandeis University, 1981), and Robyn A. Gillam, “Priestesses of Hathor: Their Function, Decline and Disappearance,” *JARCE* 32 (1995), for more discussion. The topic of early activities at Saïs warrants further study, some of which is currently underway with work being done notably by Penelope Wilson and her team.

76

El-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, vol. 1, 31–9; Penelope Wilson, “Prehistoric Settlement in the Western Delta: A Regional and Local View from Sais (Sa El-Hagar),” *JEA* 92 (2006); Penelope Wilson, “The Nile Delta,” in *The Egyptian World*, ed. Toby A. H. Wilkinson (London: Routledge, 2007); Penelope Wilson, “The Ancient Landscape around Lake Burullus,” *Egyptian Archaeology: The Bulletin of the Egyptian Exploration Society* 41 (2012); Penelope Wilson, “Two Cities at Sais: A Protocapital?” *JAEI* 11 (2016).

77

My interpretation of the respective locations of the goddesses as Neith at the head and Selket at the foot is not necessarily accepted by all scholars as will be seen more explicitly in chapter 4 in the discussion of Isis and Nephthys when they appear respectively at the foot and head of the coffin or bier.

78

Among the many sources for this object, see Christiane Desroches-

Noblecourt, *Life and Death of a Pharaoh: Tutankhamen* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1963), pls. XXXI, XXXII, and 301.

79

H. Te Velde, *Seth, God of Confusion: A Study of His Role in Egyptian Mythology and Religion*, ed. Wolfgang Helck, trans. Mrs. G. E. van Baaren-Pape, PdÄ (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977), 15, 16, figure 6, provides a discussion of the Seth-animal with a figure. This work provides a relatively recent discussion of the god Seth, concluding that he does not represent a real animal but rather a fabulous creature. The form in which he appears initially—a recumbent creature with square ears and a very stiff upright tail—is illustrated in Margaret Murray, *Saqqara Mastabas*, Egyptian Research Account (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1905), vol. 1, pl.

XXXVIIIa. Two more recent discussions of Seth include those by Eugene

Cruz-Uribe, “Sth  phty Seth, God of Power and Might,” JARCE 25 (2009): 201–9; and John Philip Turner, *Seth—A Misrepresnted God in the Ancient Egyptian Pantheon*, BAR International Series, vol. S2473 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2013).

80

El-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, 127.

81

Jean Yoyotte, “XI: Religion de l’Égypte,” *Annuaire d’école pratique des hautes études, Ve section: Sciences religieuses*, Paris (1965–6): 78; el-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, 224–34, doc. 72.

82

El-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, vol. 1, 101, vol. 2, 224, doc. 72; Kaplony, *Inschriften*, 65, 724, 1093, Taf. 8, abb. 18.

83

Kaplony, *Inschriften*, 606, Sp. 33 (“Sp.” stands for the German *Speisetischszene*, meaning a scene of an offering table). Kaplony also suggests translating this name as “Nurse of Neith,” suggesting a nurturing relationship with the goddess.

84

Sauneron, *Les Fêtes religieuses*, vol. 5, 111, §6. A visualization of this concept appears in el-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, vol. 2, 469–70, doc. 644.

85

Sauneron, *Les Fêtes religieuses*, vol. 5 (206, §§1–5), 252–7.

86

Kaplony, *Inschriften*, 625, Taf. 112, abb. 610, 578–9, 658, Taf. 109, abb. 562, 658, Sp. 26; el-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, docs. vol. 2, 29, 64, 111.

87

Susan Tower Hollis, “Anubis’s Mortuary Functions in ‘the Tale of Two Brothers,’ ” in *Hermes Aegyptiacus: Egyptological Studies for B H Stricker*, ed.

Terrence DuQuesne (Oxford: DE Publications, 1995); Susan Tower Hollis, *The Ancient Egyptian "Tale of Two Brothers": The Oldest Fairy Tale in the World* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 70–83; Susan Tower Hollis, *The Ancient Egyptian "Tale of Two Brothers": A Mythological, Religious, and Historico-Political Study*, 2nd ed. (Oakville, CT: Bannerstone Press, 2008), 71–87; Terence DuQuesne, *The Jackal Deities of Egypt I: From the Archaic Period to Dynasty X* (London: Da'th Scholarly Servies, Darengo Publications, 2005), vol. 1, 518. The latter is a vast and very important volume on Anubis but lacks any significant discussion of his relationship with Neith.

88

DuQuesne, *Jackal Deities*, 1, 44, #34, 33.

89

DuQuesne, *Jackal Deities*, 1, 42, #14.

90

Kaplony, *Inscripfen*, 232, 658, Sp. 26.

91

Kaplony, *Inscripfen*, 579. Since Anubis actually comes from the seventeenth Upper Egyptian nome, this idea is quite problematic though worth exploring.

92

Kaplony, *Inscripfen*, 572, Taf. 106, abb. 509; el-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, vol. 2, 218, doc. 35.

93

Kaplony, *Inscripfen*, 496, Sp. 41.

94

The relation of Neith and Ptah also appears in Neith's epithet *mḥtt-ḥnb-s*, "north of her wall," and Ptah's epithet *rsy-ḥnb-f*, "south of his wall," each designating part of the ancient city of Memphis, according to el-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, 40.

95

Jan Assmann, "Schöpfergott," in *LdÄ*, vol. V, col. 676–7.

96

El-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, 76–80.

97

See above discussion of the early name *msn.(t)-Nt*, when read as "weaver of Neith."

98

For an easily accessible discussion, see Vincent Arieu Tobin, "Creation Myths," in *OEAE*, vol. 2, 469–72.

99

Kaplony, *Inscripfen*, 470, Taf. 106, abb. 513; el-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, vol. 2, 217, doc. 34.

100

Sauneron, *Les Fêtes religieuses*, V, 255, §06, 2.

101

Kaplony, *Inscripfen*, 592, 192, St. 148, Taf. 153, abb. 876, St. 148. See also el-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, vol. 2, 511, doc. 745.

102

Kaplony, *Inscripfen*, 477, Taf. 107, abb. 530; el-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, vol. 2, doc. 56.

103

Sauneron, *Les Fêtes religieuses*, V, 253, §06, 1.

104

Kaplony, *Inscripfen*, 572, Taf. 106, abb. 509; el-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, 218, doc. 35.

105

Sauneron, *Les Fêtes religieuses*, V, iii; Serge Sauneron, “Esna,” in *LdÄ* vol. 2, col. 30.

106

Edward F. Wente, “The Contendings of Horus and Seth,” in *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, ed. William Kelly Simpson (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 94.

107

El-Sayed, *La Déesse Neith de Saïs*, doc. 3; Kaplony, *Inscripfen*, 445–6, 1168–9, Taf. 111, abb. 596.

108

Jan Assmann, “Neith Spricht als Mutter und Sarg, Interpretation und Metrische Analyse der Sargdeckelinschrift des Merenptah,” *MDAIK* 28, no. 2 (1972): 115–39; Jan Assmann, “Die Inschrift auf dem Äusseren Sarkophagdeckel des Merenptah,” *MDAIK* 28, no. 1 (1972): 43–73.

109

Sauneron, *Les Fêtes religieuses*, vol. 5, 110–19, 253–71.

110

The myth goes under the title of “Babylonian Creation Epic” or “Enuma Elish.” An easily accessible translation appears in Stephanie Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

111

Sauneron, *Les Fêtes religieuses*, vol. 5, 253. My translation.

112

For other creation texts, see Sauneron, *Les Fêtes religieuses*, vol. 5, 151–4, 281–2, 53–71, 88–92.

113

Tanen here is Tatanen, god of the primordial earth, bedrock. This god is not known in the Old Kingdom, appearing first in the Middle Kingdom.

Most frequently he is met as Ptah-Tatenen, although he is syncretized to other gods as well.

114

This hymn dates to Hadrian (118–138 CE). Sauneron, *Les Fêtes religieuses*, vol. 5, 110.

115

Sauneron, *Les Fêtes religieuses*, V, 110–11.

116

My thanks to my former Scripps College student Andrea Nash, fall 1990, for this suggestion.

117

James P. Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, ed. Peter Der Manuelian, 2nd ed., Writings from the Ancient World (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2015), 54; Allen, *A New Concordance*, vols. 1 and 3 (Providence, RI: Brown University, 2013), published online. http://ancientworldonline.blogspot.com/2013/07/a-new-concordance-of-pyramid-texts.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Awol-TheAncientWorldOnline+%28AWOL+-+The+Ancient+World+Online%29

118

Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 54. He translates the Egyptian as “guardian forces.” See Addendum on page 29.

119

Christopher Eyre, *The Cannibal Hymn: A Cultural and Literary Study* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002).

120

Eyre, *The Cannibal Hymn*, 79, nn. 15 and 16.

2 Hathor

1

While the Hathor heads show cow ears, she is regularly represented in later periods in the form of a cow, sometimes nursing the king and other times welcoming the deceased to the west. The importance of cattle in early Egypt and how Hathor may have been linked with them is explored in the second excursus to this chapter.

2

For example, “Furniture plaque carved in relief with a ‘woman at the window,’ ” in ivory, found in Syria, dating to the ninth–eighth century BCE, Metropolitan Museum of Art (MMA), New York (<http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/57.80.12>). Several other examples are in the MMA as well as elsewhere. It is not uncommon in biblical studies to refer to such a woman, as in 2 Kings 9.30 when Jehu went to Jezreel where Jezebel heard of his coming, dressing her hair and decorating her eyes, after which “she looked out of the window” and called out to him as he entered the gate, “Is all well with you ... murderer of your master,” that is her son Joram/Jehoram, with the result that Jehu ordered her thrown from the window.

3

For a recent example, see Deborah Vischak, “Hathor,” in OEAE, ed. Donald B. Redford (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 2:82.

4

See the next excursus, which looks at Bat.

5

See, for example, Barry J. Kemp, *Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilization*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2006), 81, 83.

6

See, for example, Juan Carlos Moreno Garcia, *Hwt et le milieu rural égyptien du III^e millénaire, économie, administration et organisation territoriale* (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, Editeur, 1999); Patricia Spencer, *The Egyptian Temple: A Lexographical Study* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1984), chapters 1 and 2.

7

Plutarch presents the only ancient narrative myth on the Egyptian gods in his *De Iside et Osiride*; see J. Gwyn Griffiths, ed., trans., commentary, *Plutarch's “De Iside et Osiride”* (Cambridge: University of Wales Press, 1970), chapters 12–40, 135–81.

8

See Griffiths, *Plutarch's “De Iside et Osiride.”* Allusions to the myth appear throughout various ancient Egyptian writings, notably mortuary texts,

beginning with the Pyramid Texts. See also François Daumas, "Hathor," in LdÄ, ed. Wolfgang Helck and Wolfhart Westendorf (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1977), vol. 2, col. 1024.

9

Alan H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 3rd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 494, Hieroglyph, O10, 5. See Griffiths, *Plutarch's "De Iside et Osiride,"* 512, where he suggests that this idea refers to an early tradition that Hathor was Horus's mother.

10

See Kemp, *Ancient Egypt: Anatomy*, 69–73, for further discussion of how single hieroglyphs can be combined to present complex concepts.

11

Schafik Allam, *Beiträge zum Hathorkult (bis zum Ende des Mittleren Reiches)* (Berlin: Verlag Bruno Hessling, 1963), 99.

12

Lana Troy, *Patterns of Queenship in Ancient Egyptian Myth and History* (Uppsala, Sweden: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1986), 21–2; Christine Favard-Meeks, "Face et profil dans l'iconographie Égyptienne," OLP 23 (1992): 25.

13

Her relation to Bat, whose early artifacts show her with stars on her horns, ears, and forehead, possibly led to this epithet, which appears in "Sinuhe," line 271. See Mohamed Gamal Rashed, "Goddess Bat and the Confusion with Hathor," in *The Horizon: Studies in Egyptology in Honour of M. A. Nur El-Din (10–12 April 2007)*, ed. Basem El-Sharkaway (Cairo: Supreme Council of Antiquities, 2009), 338. See the next excursus to this chapter for discussion.

14

Wolfgang Helck, "Herkunft und Deutung einiger Züge des frühägyptischen Königsbildes," *Anthropos* 49 (1954): 976.

15

James Edward Quibell, "Slate Palette from Hieraconpolis," ZÄS 36 (1898).

16

George Francis Legge, "The Carved Slate Palettes from Hierakonpolis and Elsewhere," PSBA 22 (1900): 126.

17

Legge, "Carved Slate Palettes," 129.

18

E. Martin Burgess and Anthony J. Arkell, "The Reconstruction of the Hathor Bowl," JEA 44 (1958), 6–11. The reconstruction of this bowl represents a collaboration between the Petrie Museum at University College London, and the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, each of which holds the fragments that the authors put together to construct the

bowl enough to be able to see what the missing parts would be. See additional materials in Anthony J. Arkell, "Brief Communications: An Archaic Representation of Hathor," JEA 41 (1955), 125–6, and Anthony J. Arkell, "An Archaic Representation of Hathor," JEA 44 (1958), 5; Robyn A. Gillam, "Priestesses of Hathor: Their Function, Decline and Disappearance," JARCE 32 (1995): 215.

19

Arkell, "An Archaic Representation of Hathor."

20

Whitney Davis suggests the heads on the Narmer palette are "human-faced bulls," in *Masking the Blow: The Scene of Representation in Late Prehistoric Egyptian Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 165.

21

Henry G. Fischer, "The Cult and Nome of the Goddess Bat," JARCE 1 (1962): 8, 16, figure 1.

22

Fischer, "Goddess Bat," 12.

23

Henry G. Fischer, *Dendera in the Third Millennium B.C.* (New York: J. J. Augustin, 1968), 33, n. 140.

24

Labib Habachi, "King Nebhepetre Mentuhotp: His Monuments, Place in History, Deification and Unusual Representations in the Form of Gods," MDAIK 19 (1963): 23–5, figure 8, pl. VIII.

25

Gillam, "Priestesses of Hathor," 215; Jochem Kahl, Nicole Kloth, and Ursula Zimmermann, *Die Inschriften der 3. Dynastie eine Bestandsaufnahme* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1995), 194, 197; Margaret Murray, *Saqqara Mastabas* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1905), 1:4, pl. 11. For recent work and discussion about Dendera that suggests the presence of Hathor personnel there in the late Third Dynasty/early Fourth Dynasty, see Gregory Marouard, "Excavating in the Shadow of Hathor, Mistress of Dendara: Overview of the Site and Preliminary Results of the 2015 Oriental Institute Mission," *News & Notes* (spring 2016): 5–16, and Gregory Marouard, "Dendara at Its Origins: New Evidence for a Pre- and Early Dynastic Settlement Site in Upper Egypt," NEA 80, no. 3 (2017): 166–75, 169.

26

Hermann Ranke, *Die Altägyptische Personennamen* (Glückstadt: J. J. Augustin, 1935), 1:198, #17. Murray, *Saqqara Mastabas*, gives no translation for the name *ḥw.t-Ḥr*.

27

For dates, see the Chronology in this volume.

28

Denise M. Doxey, "Names," in OEAE, ed. Donald B. Redford (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 2:490.

29

Gillam, "Priestesses of Hathor," 215.

30

Uvo Hölscher, *Das Grabdenkmal des Königs Chephren* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinriches'sche Buchhandlung, 1912), 16–17, abb. 7, abb. 8.

31

Helck, "Herkunft und Deutung," 976.

32

Rudolf Anthes, "Egyptian Theology in the Third Millennium B. C.," JNES 18, no. 3 (1959): 193.

33

Adolf Erman and Hermann Grapow, *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache* (Wb), 4th ed., 1926–52 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1982), 1:155, 3, gives

nothing more than "substantive" in its definition of $\text{𓄀}drwt$ and notes: PT. 570, §1462d; R. O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (CD) (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1962), 35, translates as "herd," a curious

definition to go with $M\text{𓄀}-Hrw$, "justification."

34

Anthes, "Egyptian Theology," 193.

35

Rudolf Anthes, "The Original Meaning of $M\text{𓄀}-Hrw$," JNES 13, no. 1 (1954): 41.

36

Anthes, "Egyptian Theology," 192.

37

Anthes, "Egyptian Theology," 193. A *śr*-official was a high-ranking, elite individual, a nobleman.

38

Anthes, "Egyptian Theology," 193.

39

Anthes, "The Original Meaning of $M\text{𓄀}-Hrw$," 38

40

Anthes, "The Original Meaning of $M\text{𓄀}-Hrw$," 38, n. a.

41

I have presented this text from Unis's pyramid in verse form in order to replicate the probable orality of the original ritual of the material.

42

Interestingly, the earlier translation by R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient*

Egyptian Pyramid Texts (Warminster: Aris & Phillips Ltd., 1986), 92, §466a, presents the text as an examination, questioning the individual rather than affirming the worth of the individual.

43

PT 270, §386; again I have presented this translation in verse form as a probable replication of the oral origin of the material.

44

For a brief recent discussion, see Mark Smith, *Following Osiris: Perspectives on the Osirian Afterlife from Four Millennia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 256–7.

45

For a rich, though disputed, discussion of the meaning of the locations of particular texts, see James P. Allen, “Reading a Pyramid,” in *Hommages à Jean Leclant*, ed. Catherine Berger, Gisèle Clerc, and Nicolas Grimal (Cairo: Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale, 1994), 5–28.

46

For a solid discussion of this concept in a culture contemporaneous to that of early Egypt, see Thorkild Jacobsen, “Primitive Democracy in Ancient Mesopotamia,” in *Toward the Image of Tammuz and Other Essays on Mesopotamian History and Culture*, ed. William L. Moran (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), 163–6, esp. 164.

47

Anthes, “The Original Meaning of *M³-hrw*,” 50.

48

A position supported by Gillam, “Priestesses of Hathor,” 218.

49

Helck, “Herkunft und Deutung,” 976.

50

Anthes, “The Original Meaning of *M³-hrw*,” 50; Vincent Ariele Tobin, “Myth and Politics in the Old Kingdom of Egypt,” *BiOR* 49 (1992): 619, 621, 624–5.

51

Jacobsen, “Primitive Democracy,” 164.

52

Anthes, “Egyptian Theology,” 193.

53

Helck, “Herkunft und Deutung,” 976. Also Anthes, “The Original Meaning of *M³-hrw*,” and “Egyptian Theology,” 192–3; Gillam, “Priestesses of Hathor,” 218.

54

Walter A. Fairservis, Jr., “Michael,” in *The Followers of Horus: Studies Dedicated to Michael Allen Hoffman, 1944–1990*, ed. Renée Friedman and Barbara Adams (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1992), ix–xiv.

Renée F. Friedman, "Hierakonpolis," in OEAE, ed. Donald B. Redford (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 2:98.

For example, see Renée F. Friedman, Wim Van Neer, and Veerle Linseele, "The Elite Predynastic Cemetery at Hierakonpolis: 2009–2010 Update," in *Egypt at Its Origins 3: Proceedings of the Third International Conference "Origin of the State: Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt,"* London, 27th July–1st August 2008, ed. Renée F. Friedman and Peter N. Fiske, (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters en Departement Oosterse Studies, 2011); Stan Hendrickx, Renée F. Friedman, and Merel Eyckerman, "Early Falcons," in *Vorspann oder Formative Phase? Ägypten und der vordere Orient 3500–2700 v. Chr.*, ed. Ludwig D. Morenz and Robert Kuhn (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011). Many non-peer-reviewed team reports from Hierakonpolis are available in the various issues of *Nekhen News* available at hierakonpolis online, a website devoted to covering its excavations.

Please see the sources listed in the previous note, to which I add: Katherine A. Bard, *From Farmers to Pharaohs: Mortuary Evidence for the Rise of Complex Society in Egypt* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994); David Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt: Social Transformations in North-East Africa, 10,000 to 2,640 BC* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). See particularly the following essays, all in *Egypt at Its Origins 3*: Branislav Anđelković, "Factors of State Formation in Protodynastic Egypt"; Marcelo Campagno, "Kinship, Concentration of Population and the Emergence of the State in the Nile Valley"; Juan José Castillos, "The Development and Nature of Inequality in Early Egypt"; Frédéric Guyot, "Primary and Secondary Social Evolutions from the Nile Valley to the Northern Negev in the Mid-4th Millennium BC." Likewise, Béatrix Midant-Reynes and Yann Tristant, eds., *Egypt at Its Origins 2: Proceedings of the International Conference "Origin of the State: Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt,"* Toulouse (France), 5th–8th September 2005 (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters en Departement Oosterse Studies, 2008), has many excellent articles as does Stan Hendrickx, Renée F. Friedman, Kim M. Cialowicz, Marek Chłodnicki, eds., *Egypt at its Origins: Studies in Memory of Barbara Adams, Proceedings of the International Conference "Origin of the State: Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt" Krakow, 28th August–1st September 2002* (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2004), all of which contribute to understanding the concepts around state formation and the rise of social strata along with cultural and political developments. See more recently, Matthew Douglas Adams, Béatrix Midant-Reynes, E. M. Ryan, et al., eds., *Egypt at Its Origins 4: Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference "Origin of the State: Predynastic and Early*

Dynastic Egypt,” New York, 26th–30th July 2011 (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters en Departement Oosterse Studies, 2016), and most recently Béatrix Midant-Reynes and Yann Tristant, eds., *Egypt at Its Origins 5: Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference “Origin of the State. Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt*,” Cairo, 13th–18th April 2014, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta*, vol. 260 (Leuven: Peeters, 2017).

58

Bodil Mortensen, “Heliopolis, the Predynastic Cemetery,” in *Encyclopedia of Archaeology of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Kathryn A. Bard (New York: Routledge, 1999), 366–7. Continued work on other Predynastic and Protodynastic sites always have the possibility of upending this argument.

59

See three articles by Renée F. Friedman: “The Ceremonial Centre at Hierakonpolis Locality HK29A,” in *Aspects of Early Egypt*, ed. Jeffrey Spencer (London: British Museum Press, 1996); “Return to the Temple: Excavations at HK29A,” *Nekhen News* 15 (fall 2003); and “Hierakonpolis Locality HK29A: The Predynastic Ceremonial Center Revisited,” *JARCE* 45 (2009), 79–103. See also Veerle Linseele, Wim Van Neer, and Renée F. Friedman, “Special Animals from a Special Place? The Fauna from HK29A at Predynastic Hierakonpolis,” *JARCE* 45 (2009): 105–36.

60

Kemp, *Ancient Egypt: Anatomy*, 78ff. See also the several *Origins* volumes mentioned previously as well as recent issues of Egyptology journals such as the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, the *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*, *Egyptian Archaeology*, and numerous others, particularly published in French and German.

61

Hendrickx, R. F. Friedman, and Eyckerman, “Early Falcons.”

62

Patricia Perry, “Sources of Power in Predynastic Hierakonpolis: Legacies for Egyptian Kingship,” in *Egypt at Its Origins 3: Proceedings of the Third International Conference “Origin of the State: Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt*,” London, 27th July–1st August 2008, ed. Renée F. Friedman and Peter N. Fiske (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters en Departement Oosterse Studies, 2011).

63

Perry, “Power in Predynastic Hierakonpolis,” 1286–7.

64

Anthes, “Egyptian Theology,” 193.

65

Gillam, “Priestesses of Hathor,” 217–18, referring to Heliopolis. See Kemp, *Ancient Egypt: Anatomy*, chapter 2, for discussion of the intellectual foundations of the early state.

66

Fischer, *Dendera*, 18–19; Marouard, “Dendera at Its Origins” (2017): 166–75, 168–9.

67

Émile Chassinat, “À propos d’une tête en grès rouge du roi Didoufri (Ive Dynastie) conservée au Musée du Louvre,” *Monuments et mémoires de la Fondation Eugène Piot* 25, no. 1–2 (1921): 67–8; Troy, *Patterns of Queenship*, 14, 153, 4.10; Gillam, “Priestesses of Hathor,” 214. That a “priestess of Hathor, Mistress of the Sycamore” refers to a daughter of the third king of the Fourth Dynasty calls into question the previous statement that the the earliest clear evidence for Hathor as a deity comes from Khafre’s valley temple, dating to the Fourth Dynasty. This apparent conflict most likely derives from discoveries related to Radjedef/Djedefre, a much lesser known Fourth Dynasty king and the dates of the resources used.

68

Marc Jeremy LeBlanc, “‘In Accordance with the Documents of Ancient Times’: The Origins, Development, and Significance of the Ancient Egyptian Sed Festival (Jubilee Festival),” Ph.D. diss. (Yale University, 2011).

69

Helck, “Herkunft und Deutung,” 976.

70

In fact, there are various seals and seal impressions that may be read as related to a number of individuals bearing the title of *ḥm-nṯr Ḥw.t-Ḥr*, priest of the house of Horus (or Hathor) scattered throughout Peter Kaplony’s work on early seals, but the lack of provenance and dates precludes accepting them as part of this discussion. See *Die Inschriften der Ägyptischen Frühzeit*, 3 vols. (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1963) and *Die Inschriften der Ägyptischen Frühzeit. Supplement* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1964). See particularly abb. 328: 515, 599, 1138; abb. 385: 515, 1145; abb. 398: 515, 1147; abb. 402: 1147; abb. 573: 516, 1166; abb. 574: 516, 1166; abb. 575: 516, 1166; abb. 577: 516, 1166; abb. 578: 516, 1166; abb. 579: 516, 116; abb. 569: 1165–6; abb. 579 bis: 1167; abb. 581: 1167; abb. 629: 43, 1172; abb. 630: 1172; abb. 632: 43, 1172; abb. 633: 1172–3; abb. 963: Supp. 15; abb. 964: Supp. 15; abb. 965: Supp. 15; abb. 966: Supp. 15; abb. 986: Supp. p. 17; abb. 988: Supp. 18; abb. 989: Supp. 18; abb. 1008: Supp. 20. In addition, Kaplony’s 238 was republished by T. G. H. James, *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Inscriptions in the Brooklyn Museum* (New York: Brooklyn Museum, 1974), I, 7, #22 with pl. xv, Brooklyn 44.123.24, no provenance; he dated it to the Second Dynasty and simply noted that the owner’s name was Hathor-Neferty. Kaplony’s 986 is cited in Joachim Kahl’s *Das System der ägyptischen Hieroglyphenschrift in der 0.–3. Dynastie*, ed. Friedrich Junge and Wolfhart Westendorf (Wiesbaden:

Harrassowitz Verlag, 1994), 631; only transliterating the hieroglyphs as *hm ntr Hw.t-Hr.w*, priest of Hathor/House of Horus, but with no date. Kahl cites Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der Ägyptischen Frühzeit, Supplement*, abb. 896, but Kaplony's abb. 896 with its note on page 6 does not have anything to do with *Hw.t-Hr.w* at all; however, abb. 963–6, each of which shows the typical sign for Hathor with notes on page 15, do suggest *hm-ntr Hw.t-Hr.w*, but neither provenance nor possible dates is suggested. Finally Ilona Regulski, in *A Palaeographic Study of Early Writing in Egypt* (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters and Departement Oosterse Studies, 2010), 155, shows the O6, O7, and O8 signs found in the mining area of Balad that Cristiana Köhler interpreted as referring to a yet unknown king in Cristiana Köhler, "Annexe: Preliminary Pottery Report: les mines du Ouadi um Balad desert oriental," BIFAO 98 (1998): 71, but which Edwin C. M. van den Brink suggests refer rather to Hathor; Edwin C. M. van den Brink, "The Pottery-Incised Serekh-Signs of Dynasties 0–1 Part II: Fragments and Additional Complete Vessels," *Archéo-Nil* 11 (2001): 78–9.

71

The stela further notes her *rn nd.s*, small name, as *tp.s*, and with the parallel to the small name it is clear the great name is truly a name, particularly since she also bears the title of *rh.t nsw* (king's acquaintance), though how to understand the *Hw.t-Hr* remains in doubt. Kahl, Kloth, and Zimmermann, *Die Inschriften der 3. Dynastie*, 194, 197; Murray, *Saqqara Mastabas*, 1, pl. II.

72

The source of the goddess's characteristic features—initially the lyriform horns surrounding a sun disc that form her key defining headdress—is uncertain. These horns may derive from her connection with the Horus king in the rituals related to his long association with cattle, an association that began in the Predynastic Period. Very interestingly, in Stan Hendrickx, John Coleman Darnell, and Maria Carmela Gatto, "The Earliest Representations of Royal Power in Egypt: The Rock Drawings of Nag El-Hamdulab (Aswan)," *Antiquity* 86 (2012), figures 10 and 12 show cattle with lyriform horns. Alternatively—or perhaps as a result of the relationship to the king—the early Horus king appropriated the idea of cattle that were a very important part of prehistoric Egyptian life and manifested this appropriation quite definitively in the frequent appearance of the king as bull and the bovine head, known as Bat. In fact, the bovine head was such an important part of the early royal insignia that it appears eight times on the Narmer Palette. The sun disc may relate to the growing royal

interest in the god *R[☉]*, evidenced as early as the Second Dynasty, whose second king was *R[☉] nb*, Re is my lord, for which see Jochem Kahl, "Ra Is My Lord": *Searching for the Rise of the Sun God at the Dawn of Egyptian History* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007); Jürgen von Beckerath,

Handbuch der Ägyptischen Königsnamen (Mainz am Rhine: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1999), 42–3; Ronald J. Leprohon, *The Great Name: Ancient Egyptian Royal Titulary* (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2013), 28 and n. 64. This interest in Re becomes considerably emphasized in the Fourth Dynasty when Khufu, the Dynasty's second king, named two of his sons with Re names: Radjedef and Khafre, and the latter named the son who was his successor, Menkaure, with a Re name. See Beckerath, *Handbuch der Ägyptischen Königsnamen*, 52–5; Leprohon, *The Great Name*, 34–6; Aidan Dodson and Dyan Hilton, *The Complete Royal Families of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 52–3.

73

See, for example, John Baines, “Origins of Egyptian Kingship,” in *Ancient Egyptian Kingship* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 126; Toby A. H. Wilkinson, *Royal Annals of Ancient Egypt: The Palermo Stone and Its Associated Fragments* (London: Kegan Paul International, 2000), 90–1.

74

Leslie Anne Warden, “Centralized Taxation During the Old Kingdom,” in *Towards a New History for the Egyptian Old Kingdom: Perspectives on the Pyramid Age*, ed. Peter Der Manuelian and Thomas Schneider (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 475. Warden presents a strong argument against this royal activity as solely economic. See also Sally L. D. Katary, “Taxation,” in *OEA*, ed. Donald B. Redford (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 3:351–2.

75

Helck, “Herkunft und Deutung,” 976. Fischer, *Dendera*, 34, states that the earliest evidence for an association of Hathor and Re dates to the sun temples of the early Fifth Dynasty. In contrast, Peter Kaplony, “Ka,” in *LdÄ*, ed. Wolfgang Helck and Wolfhart Westendorf (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1978), 3:275–82, argues that *ntr* in expressions with the *dw*³-mark on Old Kingdom seals stands for and is interchangeable with Re's name, dating to the Second Dynasty, 71–2. There is a certain sense to his argument in that some kings begin to use Re as part of their names beginning with Neb-Re, the second king of the Second Dynasty; see Beckerath, *Handbuch Der Ägyptischen Königsnamen*, 42–3; Kahl, “*Ra Is My Lord*.”

76

Kahl, “*Ra Is My Lord*.” See also Leprohon's comments on this name in *The Great Name*, 28 and n. 64.

77

Leprohon, *The Great Name*, 36; Miroslav Verner, *Sons of the Sun: Rise and Fall of the Fifth Dynasty* (Prague: Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Arts, 2014), 243.

78

See also Leprohon, *The Great Name*, 28, 35–6.

Verner, *Sons of the Sun*, 10–11, suggests, along with various other scholars, that the story of the birth of the kings in the Papyrus Westcar contains a kernel of historical fact reflecting an unusual assumption of power at the beginning of the Fifth Dynasty. See also Rolf Gundlach, *Der Pharao und sein Staat, die Grundlegung der Ägyptischen Königsideologie im 4. und 3. Jahrtausend* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1998), 139, 246–8.

Beckerath, *Handbuch der Ägyptischen Königsnamen*, 26–7. The “son of Re” name did not become a standard feature of royal titulary until the Middle Kingdom.

See index entry for “Hathor” in T. A. H. Wilkinson, *Royal Annals*, none of which predates the Fifth Dynasty, although Favard-Meeks, “Face et Profil,” 25, states that Hathor becomes associated with Re in the Fourth Dynasty, citing the Palermo Stone.

Peter Kaplony, *Die Rollsiegel des Alten Reichs II: Katalog Der Rollsiegel: A. Text; B. Tafeln* (Brussels: Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1981). See notably Taf. 67, #14 and #18 (Neferirkare); Taf. 81, #3 (Raneferef); Taf. 87, #12 (Djedkare); Taf. 88, #23 (Djedkare); Taf. 96, #22 (Unis), while Hathor alone appears carrying the was-scepter even more frequently, notably on Taf. 33, #8 (Menkaure); Taf. 50, #4 (Shepseskaf); Taf. 51, #3 (Userkaf); Taf. 53, #20 (Userkaf); Taf. 67, #16 (Neferkare); Taf. 70, #38 (Neferkare); Taf. 72, #5 (Neuserre); Taf. 74 #16 (Neuserre); Taf. 78, #46 (Neuserre); Taf. 97, #29 (Unis); Taf. 99, #2 (Meryre Pepi I); Taf. 110, #40 (Pepi I); Taf. 111, #49 (Pepi I). Also notable in a review of Kaplony’s seals is the ubiquitous presence of the Hathor hieroglyph beginning with Radjedef, but most particularly with Menkaure. Significantly, Hathor does not appear in anthropomorphic form in John Nolan’s catalog of mud sealing impressions from Fourth Dynasty Giza. John Nolan, “Mud Sealings and Fourth Dynasty Administration at Giza,” Ph.D. diss. (University of Chicago, 2010).

Kaplony, *Die Rollsiegel des Alten Reichs II*, Taf. 88, #22.

Andrew H. Gordon and Calvin A. Schwabe, “The Egyptian WAs-Scepter and Its Modern Analogues,” *JARCE* 32 (1995): 188, 92–3; Richard H. Wilkinson, *Reading Egyptian Art: A Hieroglyphic Guide to Ancient Egyptian Painting and Sculpture* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1992), 181; Geoffrey Graham, “Insignias,” in *OEA*, ed. Donald B. Redford (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 2:166.

Graham, "Insignias," 166.

86

Troy, *Patterns of Queenship*, 23.

87

See Michel Baud, "II. 5 the Relative Chronology of Dynasties 6 and 8." In *Ancient Egyptian Chronology*, edited by Erik Hornung, Rolf Krauss, David A. Warburton and with Marianne Eaton-Krauss. Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section One, the Near and Middle East, 146 (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2006), and Hornung, Krauss, and Warburton, "Chronological Table," 191.

88

Beckerath, *Handbuch der Ägyptischen Königsnamen*, 62–3, noting

particularly that in addition to his $S^{\frac{1}{2}}-R^{\frac{1}{2}}$ name, son of Re, Pepi, and his $S^{\frac{1}{2}}-Hwt-Hr$ name and his $S^{\frac{1}{2}}-Hwt-Hr$, *nbt nht*, Son of Hathor, Mistress of the Sycamore, name as part of his full name, Pepi I bears yet another name, $S^{\frac{1}{2}}-I^{\frac{1}{2}}tm$, son of Atum, relating him to still a third deity. (the $S^{\frac{1}{2}}-Hwt-Hr$, *nbt nht* name is a variant of the bare $S^{\frac{1}{2}}-Hwt-Hr$ name.) See also Habachi,

"Nebhepetre Mentuhotep," 78–9, a king who carries only the $S^{\frac{1}{2}}-R^{\frac{1}{2}}$, son of Re, name in addition to his $S^{\frac{1}{2}}-Hwt-Hr$ name. In "Priestesses of Hathor, 234, Gillam suggests that the intimacy of the Fourth through Sixth Dynasty kings considering Hathor as kingmaker concluded when this family line ended at the end of the Sixth Dynasty. Although Nebhepetre Mentuhotep attempted to bring the concept back following the turmoil that lasted from the end of the Sixth Dynasty through the early part of the Eleventh Dynasty, his attempt did not succeed, and women were gradually excluded from the cult of the goddess.

89

The possible implications of the use of the hieroglyphic name in picture form as contrasted to the anthropomorphic ideogram needs its own study.

90

Beckerath, *Handbuch der Ägyptischen Königsnamen*, 62–3, E 4. The use of $S^{\frac{1}{2}}-I^{\frac{1}{2}}tm$ *wnw*, son of Atum of Heliopolis, here in the cartouche with $Hwt-Hr$, *nbt* *wnt* perhaps suggests a balance of major deities, male and female, in Lower and Upper Egypt. A bit of future research on this topic might well be quite interesting and perhaps productive.

91

George A. Reisner, *Mycerinus: The Temples of the Third Pyramid at Giza* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), 109–10; images online at <http://www.gizapyramids.org/static/html/mycerinus.jsp>.

92

Fischer, *Dendera*, 33, n. 140, states this cylinder seal is MMA 10.130.1613. See Kaplony, *Die Rollsiegel des Alten Reichs II*, 101–2 and pl. 33, 8. An

exploration of the meanings of *mry*, “beloved,” and *mn-ḥb*, “firm/established in the heart,” could prove interesting and useful.

93

See, Fischer, *Dendera*, part IV.

94

Florence Dunn Friedman, “Reading the Menkaure Triads, Part I,” in *Palace and Temple: Architecture—Decoration—Ritual*, 5, *Symposium zur Ägyptischen Königsideologie*, 5th *Symposium on Egyptian Royal Ideology*, Cambridge, July, 16th–17th, 2007, ed. Rolf Gundlach and Kate Spence (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011), 25.

95

F. D. Friedman, “Menkaure Triads, Part I,” 25–6.

96

Three of the complete triads include the king’s Horus name in the serekh, Hermopolis, Thebes, and Diospolis Parva, while the fourth, Cynopolis, omits the serekh completely. F. D. Friedman, “Menkaure Triads, Part I,” 30. For her initial discussion of these epithets, with pictures and drawings of the full texts on the bases of the four complete triads, see Florence Dunn Friedman, “The Cultic Relationship of the Menkaure Triads to the Small Step Pyramids,” in *Royal vs Divine Authority: Acquisition, Legitimation and Renewal of Power*, Prague, June 26–28, 2013, 7th *Symposium on Egyptian Royal Ideology*, ed. Filip Coppens, Jirí Janák, and Hana Vymazalová (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2015), 96. Nolan’s “Mud Sealings and Fourth Dynasty Administration at Giza,” shows that the use of the serekh with the king’s name in the Fourth Dynasty indicates the living king, while the serekh is omitted if the king is deceased.

97

Reisner, *Mycerinus*, 109–10, 23–4, pls. 38–46.

98

F. D. Friedman, “Menkaure Triads, Part I,” 27–8.

99

F. D. Friedman, “Menkaure Triads, Part I,” 28.

100

F. D. Friedman, “Menkaure Triads, Part I,” 33.

101

F. D. Friedman, “Menkaure Triads, Part I,” 33.

102

F. D. Friedman, “Menkaure Triads, Part I,” 37.

103

F. D. Friedman, “Menkaure Triads, Part I,” 40.

104

Florence Dunn Friedman, “Reading the Menkaure Triads: Part II (Multi-

Directionality),” in *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives: Egyptian Art and Archaeology 2750–2150 BC*, ed. Nigel Strudwick and Helen Strudwick (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2011), 99.

105

Florence Dunn Friedman, “The Menkaure Dyad(s),” in *Egypt and Beyond: Essays Presented to Leonard H. Lesko Upon His Retirement from the Wilbour Chair of Egyptology at Brown University June 2005*, ed. Stephen E. Thompson and Peter Der Manuelian (Providence, RI: Brown University, Department of Egyptology and Ancient Western Asian Studies, 2008), figure 14a–d.

106

F. D. Friedman, “The Menkaure Dyad(s),” 134.

107

Susan Tower Hollis, “Queens and Goddesses in Ancient Egypt,” in *Women and Goddess Traditions in Antiquity and Today*, ed. Karen L. King (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997), 220–1, and Susan Tower Hollis, “Goddesses and Sovereignty in Ancient Egypt,” in *Goddesses Who Rule*, ed. Elisabeth Benard and Beverly Moon (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 222.

108

Reisner, *Mycerinus*, 37, 110, and pls. 54–60.

109

Hollis, “Goddesses and Sovereignty,” 222, a suggestion now needing further discussion, as the following discussion shows.

110

F. D. Friedman, “The Menkaure Dyad(s),” 117–21; Troy, *Patterns of Queenship*, 154, 4.18. See also Vivienne G. Callender and Peter Jánosi, “The Tomb of Queen Khamerernebt II at Giza,” *MDAIK* 53 (1997).

111

F. D. Friedman, “The Menkaure Dyad(s),” 123.

112

F. D. Friedman, “The Menkaure Dyad(s),” 123. In contrast, earlier in the Fourth Dynasty, a sculpture of Djedfre and his queen depicts her, in very small scale, kneeling or squatting at the bottom of his left leg. See Hollis, “Queens and Goddesses,” 219–20, 27, figure 21.

113

F. D. Friedman, “The Menkaure Dyad(s),” 135.

114

F. D. Friedman, “The Menkaure Dyad(s),” 135.

115

F. D. Friedman, “The Menkaure Dyad(s),” 144.

116

Kurt Sethe, *Urkunden I: Urkunden des Alten Reiches* (Leipzig: J. C.

Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1904), 232; James P. Allen, "Rē-Wer's Accident," in *Studies in Pharaonic Religion and Society in Honour of J. Gwyn Griffiths*, ed. Alan B. Lloyd (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1992), 14–15; Nigel C. Strudwick, *Texts from the Pyramid Age* (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2005), 305–6, #227.

117

Allen, "Rē-Wer's Accident," 17; Strudwick, *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, 16, 305–6, #227.

118

It is important to understand here that traditional beliefs in the power of words and of the divine are today quite commonly referred to as "magic." For instance, the Egyptian word *ḥkꜣw* is commonly translated as "religion" even though the Egyptian meaning is "magic," as the ancient Egyptians lacked a word equivalent for "religion." Among the many discussions available on this topic in anthropology, I recommend the following two for elucidation of the power present in contact with the "other," that is, magic, and the power of words as well: Stanley Tambiah, "The Magical Power of Words," *Man, New Series* 3, no. 2 (1968), and Walter B. Cannon, "'Voodoo' Death," *American Anthropologist, New Series* 44, no. 2 (1942).

119

Allen, "Rē-Wer's Accident," 18.

120

John Baines, "Prehistories of Literature: Performance, Fiction, Myth," in *Definitely: Egyptian Literature: Proceedings of the Symposium "Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms," Los Angeles, March 24–26, 1995*, ed. Gerald Moers (Göttingen: Seminar für Ägyptologie und Koptologie, 1999), 23–4.

121

Strudwick, *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, 16, 305.

122

Helmut Brunner, *Die Geburt des Gottkönigs: Studien zur Überlieferung eines Altägyptischen Mythos*, ed. Wolfgang Helck and Eberhard Otto (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1964). I also suspect that the narrative of the birth of the first three kings of the Fifth Dynasty related in the Westcar Papyrus is reflected in New Kingdom iconography. See William Kelly Simpson, "King Cheops and the Magicians," in *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies, and Poetry*, ed. William Kelly Simpson (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 13–24, and Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings: The Old and Middle Kingdoms* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 1:215–22.

123

F. D. Friedman, "The Menkaure Dyad(s)," 138.

124

F. D. Friedman, "The Menkaure Dyad(s)," 139.

125

F. D. Friedman, "The Menkaure Dyad(s)," 139.

126

Beckerath, *Handbuch der Ägyptischen Königsnamen*, 25. My translation.

127

Marianne Galvin, "The Priestesses of Hathor in the Old Kingdom and the 1st Intermediate Period," Ph.D. diss. (Brandeis University, 1981).

Gillam, "Priestesses of Hathor," 234.

128

Beckerath, *Handbuch der Ägyptischen Königsnamen*, 78–9.

129

Possibly not the sun eye but a star. Cf., Rudolf Anthes, "Das Sonnenauge in den Pyramidentexten," ZÄS 86 (1961): 1–21, reprinted in Rudolf Anthes, *Ägyptische Theologie im Dritten Jahrtausend v. Chr.* (Budapest: Chaires d'Histoire Ancienne de l'Université Loránd Eötvös de Budapest, 1983), 223–43.

130

See also PT 534, §1278b and PT 539, §1327b. Faulkner, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 172, 202, 209; James P. Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, WAW, ed. Peter der Manuelian, 2nd ed. (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2015), 138, 172, 175. I have chosen to cite the texts in Allen's second edition of *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* due to its greater usability rather than his first edition: James P. Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*. Writings from the Ancient World. Edited by Theodore J. Lewis. 1st ed. Edited by Peter der Manuelian. (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), which is rather unwieldy to manage.

131

PT 485, §1027c also appears in Merenre's pyramid. I have used Allen's *A New Concordance* in this analysis.

132

See Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 172, 207, n. 102. This text appears only in Pepi I's pyramid.

133

Fischer, *Dendera*, 1–2.

134

Fischer discusses these Archaic Period artifacts (by which he means Early Dynastic artifacts) at length in *Dendera*, 23–30.

135

N. de Garis Davies, "An Alabaster Sistrum Dedicated by King Teta," JEA 6, no. 2 (1920): 70. Davies notes that it is on this sistrum that the complete titulary of Teti appears for the first time, certainly true for the date of

publication.

136

Beckerath, *Handbuch der Ägyptischen Königsnamen*, 62–3.

137

Fischer, *Dendera*, 37–40.

138

Beckerath, *Handbuch der Ägyptischen Königsnamen*, 78–9.

139

Anna Maria Donadoni Roveri, “Gebelein,” in *Beyond the Pyramids: Egyptian Regional Art from the Museo Egizio, Turin*, ed. Gay Robins (Atlanta, GA: Emory University, Museum of Art and Archaeology, 1990), 23.

140

Roveri, “Gebelein,” 29.

141

Ludwig D. Morenz, “Zur Dekoration der Frühzeitlichen Tempel am Beispiel zweier Fragmente des Archaischen Tempels von Gebelein,” in *Ägyptische Tempel—Struktur, Funktion und Programm, Akten der Ägyptologischen Tempeltagungen in Gosen 1990 und in Mainz 1992*, ed. Rolf Gundlach and Matthais Rochholz (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1994), 233.

142

Ludwig D. Morenz, “Hathor in Gebelein: Vom Archaischen Höhenheiligtum zur Konzeption des Sakralbezirkes als Zweites Dendera unter Menthut-hotep (II),” in *7. Ägyptologische Tempeltagung: Structuring Religion, Leuven, 28 September–1 Oktober 2005*, ed. René Preys (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009), 196.

143

L. D. Morenz, “Hathor in Gebelein,” 194.

144

L. D. Morenz, “Hathor in Gebelein,” 198–9.

145

Elisa Fiore Marochetti, “Gebelein,” in *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, ed. Willeke Wendrich (Los Angeles: UCLA, 2013), 1, <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/2j11p1r7>.

146

Marochetti, “Gebelein,” 3.

147

Marochetti, “Gebelein,” 3.

148

Wolfgang Helck, *Die Altägyptischen Gaue*, ed. Wolfgang Röllig (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1974), 79.

149

Allam, *Beiträge zum Hathorkult*, 42–54, 97–8; Fischer, *Dendera*, chapters 1–2; L. D. Morenz, “Hathor in Gebelein.”

150

Allam, *Beiträge zum Hathorkult*, 23–4, 90–5.

151

Amnon Ben-Tor, “New Light on the Relations Between Egypt and Southern Palestine During the Early Bronze Age,” *BASOR* 281 (February 1991). For additional discussions of such relations, see various articles in the conference volumes related to the Egypt at its Origins conferences referred to in notes 53 and 54. Further pertinent materials may be found in two edited volumes: Edwin C. M. van den Brink, ed., *The Nile Delta in Transition: 4th–3rd Millennium B.C.* (Tel Aviv: R. Pinkhas, 1992), and Edwin C. M. van den Brink and Thomas E. Levy, eds., *Egypt and the Levant: Interrelations from the 4th Through the Early 3rd Millennium BCE* (London: Leicester University Press, 2002).

152

A. Ben-Tor, “Relations between Egypt and Southern Palestine,” 3–4; William A. Ward, “Early Contacts between Egypt, Canaan, and Sinai: Remarks on the Paper by Amnon Ben-Tor,” *BASOR* 281 (1991); Daphna Ben-Tor, “Egyptian Scarab Seals in Ancient Canaan,” in *The Oxford Handbook on Ancient Egypt and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Susan Tower Hollis (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

153

Nina Jidejian, *Byblos Through the Ages* (Beirut: Dar el-Machreq Publishers, 1968), 15–16.

154

Mary Wright, “Literary Sources for the History of Palestine and Syria: Contacts Between Egypt and Syro-Palestine During the Protodynastic Period,” *BA* 48, no. 4 (1985): 251.

155

William A. Ward, “Egypt and the East Mediterranean from Predynastic Times to the End of the Old Kingdom,” *JESHO* 6 (1963): 19.

156

A. Ben-Tor, “Relations Between Egypt and Southern Palestine,” 4.

157

A. Ben-Tor, “Relations Between Egypt and Southern Palestine,” 11–12. See also D. Ben-Tor, “Egyptian Scarab Seals in Ancient Canaan.”

158

James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 3rd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 227. The translation of *mrw*-wood here agrees with the analysis of *mrw*-wood itself as cedar, although no firm evidence of its presence in Egypt appears prior to Khufu. Like A. Ben-Tor, in “Relations Between Egypt and Southern Palestine,” 4, Ward in his “Early Contacts between Egypt, Canaan, and Sinai,” 14, notes that cedar is identified in the early Old Kingdom, where he also states that *mrw*-wood is not specifically cedar

but a kind of coniferous wood or perhaps an inclusive term for coniferous wood and its products. See also Susan Tower Hollis, *The Ancient Egyptian "Tale of Two Brothers": The Oldest Fairy Tale in the World* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 117; Susan Tower Hollis, *The Ancient Egyptian "Tale of Two Brothers": A Mythological, Religious, and Historico-Political Study*, 2nd ed. (Oakville, CT: Bannerstone Press, 2008), 130.

159

A. Ben-Tor, "Relations between Egypt and Southern Palestine," 4; Björn Landström, *Sailing Ships in Words and Pictures from Papyrus Boats to Full-Riggers* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1969).

160

Martha Sharp Joukowsky, "Byblos," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*, ed. Eric M. Meyers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 1:391; Muntaha Saghie, *Byblos in the Third Millennium B.C.: A Reconstruction of the Stratigraphy and a Study of the Cultural Connections* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips Ltd., 1983), 99. A comprehensive list of royal names found in Byblos appears in Mary Wright and Dennis Pardee, "Literary Sources for the History of Palestine and Syria: Contacts between Egypt and Syro-Palestine During the Old Kingdom," *BA* 51, no. 3 (1988): 148, while another appears in Wolfgang Helck, *Die Beziehungen Ägyptens zu Vorderasien im 3. und 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1971), 21–2, n. 64.

161

James Weinstein, "Byblos," in *OEA*, ed. Donald B. Redford (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1:219. The genesis of this material lies in the question "Was Hathor the original Mistress of Byblos?" addressed to me by Anson Rainey at the 2000 Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in Nashville, Tennessee.

162

Allam's monograph *Beiträge zum Hathorkult* is the earliest devoted specifically to Hathor, though curiously in his discussion of Hathor's presence outside Egypt, he limits himself to the Sinai (76–89), thus omitting any discussion of her presence in Byblos. Geraldine Pinch, *Votive Offerings to Hathor* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, Ashmolean Museum, 1993), addresses votive offerings to Hathor wherever they occurred, both in Egypt proper and in other areas including Byblos (see her index).

163

A seal, apparently of Byblite manufacture and tentatively dated to the Fifth Dynasty by Geoffrey T. Martin, includes the name of Hathor on it though it lacks an epithet; Geoffrey T. Martin, "A Much-Published Byblite Cylinder Seal," in *Ancient Egyptian and Mediterranean Studies in Memory of William A. Ward*, ed. Leonard H. Lesko (Providence, RI: Brown

University, Department of Egyptology, 1998), 173–82.

164

Maurice Dunand, *Fouilles de Byblos, 1926–1932*, vol. 1 (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Guenther, 1934), no. 2856, 181, and pl. XL; Maurice Chéhab, “Noms de personnalités égyptiennes découverts au Liban,” *BMBeyr* 22 (1969): 14 and pl. II. The current location of this statuette is not indicated in the cited literature. The sign that appears in this figure does not appear in the sign list in Alan Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 3rd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), though it is clearly part of a printer’s font. In a personal communication, Gerald Kadish suggested that it was a variation of R 5, a censor, not uncommonly signifying *kp* as part of *kpny* (Byblos), a variant writing of *kbn*. The volume by Nicolas Grimal, Jochen Hallof, and Dirk van der Plas, eds., *Hieroglyphica: Sign List-Liste Des Signes-Zeichenliste*, 2nd ed. (Utrecht: Centre for Computer-Aided Egyptological Research, 2000), suggests it is sign S105 or W109.

165

Harold H. Nelson, “Fragments of Egyptian Old Kingdom Stone Vases from Byblos,” *Berytus* (1934), no. 5023a, <http://www.etana.org/node/2959>.

166

Nelson, “Fragments,” no. 5023.

167

Dunand, *Fouilles de Byblos*, 1:181, no. 2856 and pl. XL, discusses this pair, suggesting the possibility that the fragment of a “t” still visible might be part of an epithet, Mistress of Byblos. He wants to see some light marks as the “b” of KBN, “Byblos,” so he might restore “Mistress of Byblos” here, noting, however, that the very light line going right is very close to the “t”; 417, no. 6496 and pl. XXXVIII. Chéhab writes about the same piece (actually two pieces), noting that the signs that follow the signs “Hathor, Mistress of Dendera” “allow the restoration of ‘Lady of Byblos’ ” (my translation); Chéhab, “Noms de personnalités égyptiennes,” 14 and pl. II, 13. Of course, that we might restore such does not equal that it should be done; still, the possibility is there, though we need to take care not to make gaps say what we want them to.

168

Hwt-Hr nbt kbn ⁱ*rs hmw*, CT I, 61, 260f–262b (B10Ca; B10Cb; B10Cc: outer coffin of ⁱ*mn h* ³*t*, from el-Bersha (Cairo 28092 = B10); B4C: outer coffin of ^s*t* *hpt* (Cairo 28086)).

169

Francis Llewellyn Griffith, *Hieratic Papyri from Kahun and Gurob (Principally of the Middle Kingdom): Text* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1898), 69–70 and pl. XXVIII, 5.

170

Ranke, *Die Altägyptische Personennamen*, 1:198, 5.

171

See William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), index.

172

In fact, Corinne Bonnet, *Astarté, Dossier documentaire et perspectives historiques* (Rome: Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, 1996), argues convincingly on other grounds that Ba'alat, "Lady of Byblos," functions as a title rather than a divine name, and this scholar, like so many others, assumes that the identification of Hathor with the Byblite goddess goes back at least to the Egyptian Old Kingdom.

173

Pinch, *Votive Offerings to Hathor*.

174

Pinch, *Votive Offerings to Hathor*, 26–37.

175

Pinch, *Votive Offerings to Hathor*, 41–5.

176

Pinch, *Votive Offerings to Hathor*, 49. She notes the sites of Magara, Wadi Kharit, and Bir Nasib in the area of Serabit el-Khadim in which copper was mined and smelted.

177

Pinch, *Votive Offerings to Hathor*, 49–50.

178

Pinch, *Votive Offerings to Hathor*, 59–65.

179

Pinch, *Votive Offerings to Hathor*, 71–2.

180

The text, "Hathor, Lady of Byblos, makes the steering-oar of your bark," from Coffin Text spell 61 appears on three coffins, all from the same person and all from Deir el-Bersha in Middle Egypt, for a total of three complete appearances, the text for each of which is essentially the same. Adriaan de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts I: Texts of Spells 1–75*, ed. James Henry Breasted and Thomas George Allen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935), 1:262. B10Ca; B10Cb; B10Cc, all from Cairo 28092, coffin of *Ḥmn-m-ḥt*.

181

Siegfried Morenz, *Egyptian Religion*, trans. Ann E. Keep (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1973), 235.

182

CT VI, 623, 239 b–g, from Thebes T 1 C: Berlin 9.

183

F. Ll. Griffith, "The Inscriptions," in *Denderah 1898*, ed. W. M. Flinders Petrie (London: Egyptian Exploration Society, 1900), chapter 8, 40–59, 48, and pl. VIII; Allam, *Beiträge zum Hathorkult*, 52. Both Griffith (48) and Allam (52) assume this transport refers to ships due to the hieroglyph of a boat (P29?); the plate in Griffith (pl. 8) is badly broken and thus hard to read. Fischer, *Dendera*, 136–53, discusses the rich material from

Mrr^f or *Mrr*^f-*ṯkr* but does not address this particular title (136).

184

There are over 140 words for boat or bark in ancient Egyptian. *Kpn.t* designates the boat that traveled to Byblos.

185

The Byblos boats are depicted in Egypt at the same time as the rebuilding of the Ba'alat Gebal temple at Byblos (necessary due to destruction by fire in K II, probably at the end of Egypt's Second Dynasty), which shows an apparent Egyptian influence. Excavations show that the two main façades of this temple recall the Fifth Dynasty valley temple of Sahure, and contemporary ceramic remains also link the Byblos K IV Period with the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties. See Saghih, *Byblos in the Third Millennium B.C.*, 130, table on 09, 131.

186

That boats plied the Levantine coast in the fourth millennium is slowly being proven by researchers such as Ezra Marcus, "Early Seafaring and Maritime Activity in the Southern Levant from Prehistory through the Third Millennium BCE," in *Egypt and the Levant: Interrelations from the 4th through Early 3rd Millennium BCE*, ed. Edwin C. M. van den Brink and Thomas E. Levy (London: Leicester University Press, 2002), and Ram Gophna, "Elusive Anchorage Points along the Israel Littoral and the Egyptian–Canaanite Maritime Route during the Early Bronze Age I," in *Egypt and the Levant: Interrelations from the 4th through Early 3rd Millennium BCE*, ed. Edwin C. M. van den Brink and Thomas E. Levy (London: Leicester University Press, 2002).

187

S. Morenz, *Egyptian Religion*, 341, n. 16, referring the reader to Dieter Müller, *Ägypten und die Griechischen Isis-Aretalogien* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1961). Fekri A. Hassan, "The Earliest Goddesses of Egypt: Divine Mothers and Cosmic Bodies," in *Ancient Goddesses*, ed. Lucy Goodison and Christine Morris (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 99, however, has pointed out that Isis was considered closely related to the sea and boats. It is important to note, however, that these references are to Isis after the Old Kingdom, in fact, largely from the New Kingdom on, when she becomes syncretized with Hathor in many ways. In fact in J. Gwyn Griffiths, *Apuleius of Madauros: The Isis-Book (Metamorphoses, Book XI)* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), we find Isis emerging from the sea at the same time, noting that *The Metamorphoses* most likely dates to the second

century CE.

188

Adolf Erman, *Die Religion der Ägypter: ihr Werden und Vergehen in vier Jahrtausenden*, 2nd Auflage mit einem Vorwort von Jan Assmann ed. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001), 349.

189

Ramses Moftah, “Die Uralte Sykomore und andere Erscheinungen der Hathor,” *ZÄS* 92 (1965): 44.

190

Prentice Duell and Sakkarah Expedition, *The Mastaba of Mereruka Part II Chambers a 11–13 Tomb Chamber Exterior Plates 104–219* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938), pl. 134.

191

Moftah notes that sailors sang songs for safe journeys; Moftah, “Die Uralte Sykomore,” 45. Of concern to me here is the absence of any references to primary documents supporting these assertions including references to songs.

192

C. J. Bleeker, *Hathor and Thoth: Two Key Figures of the Ancient Egyptian Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 72, referring his reader to Moftah, “Die Uralte Sykomore,” 44, who in turn refers his reader to Allam, *Beiträge zum Hathorkult*, with his notes about Coffin Text references; 118–20: CT I, 260f–261b (Sp. 61); CT VI 58b–c (Sp. 484); CT VI 239b–g (Sp. 623); CT IV 343d–e (Sp. 341); CT VI 382a, l–o (Sp. 753), with German translations of the CT spells on 141–3, though these do not provide the songs. For Coffin Text references, see Brigitte Altenmüller, *Synkretismus in den Sargtexten* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1975), 134 and 136.

193

Bleeker, *Hathor and Thoth*, 73.

194

Bleeker, *Hathor and Thoth*, 73.

195

Hathor’s role in popular religion needs exploration here as well. In Egypt, at least, two objects, Louvre C 43 and Vienna Saal 1, Nr. 14, provide Middle Kingdom evidence that the Mistress of Byblos received worship in Egypt, with the family, according to Adolf Erman, “Zur Ägyptischen Religion,” *ZÄS* 42 (1905), 109–10.

Excursus 1: Bat

1

Henry G. Fischer, “The Cult and Nome of the Goddess Bat,” *JARCE* 1 (1962): 11.

2

Fischer, "The Cult and Nome of the Goddess Bat," 11, n. 23, 13, n. 45.

3

Fischer, "The Cult and Nome of the Goddess Bat," 7, n. 3. Wolfgang Helck, *Die altägyptischen Gaue*, ed. Wolfgang Röllig, Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients (Widsbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1974), 89.

4

See, for example, Deborah Vischak, "Hathor," in OEAE, ed. Donald B. Redford (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 82; Krzysztof M. Cialowicz, "Palettes," in OEAE, ed. Donald B. Redford (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 19; Anne-Sophie Bomhard, *The Naos of the Decades: The Underwater Archaeology of the Canopic Region in Egypt: From the Observation of the Sky to Mythology and Astrology* (Oxford: Oxford Centre for Maritime Archaeology, 2008), 246; Ermanno Zoffili and Peter A. Clayton, *Kleidung und Schmuck im Alten Ägypten*, trans. Peter Hahlbrock (Frankfurt: Propyläen Verlag, 1992), 32; Ludwig D. Morenz, "Hathor in Gebelein: vom archaischen Höhenheiligtum zur Konzeption des Sakralbezirkes als zweites Dendera unter Menthu-Hotep (II)," in 7 *Ägyptologische Tempeltagung: Structuring Religion. Leuven, 28 September-1 Oktober 2005*, ed. René Preys (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009), 192.

5

One of the three copies of the text reads, "Meryre is Bat with her two faces," referring to Pepi I. For a limited discussion, see Youri Volokhine, *La Frontalité dans l'iconographie de l'égypte ancienne* (Geneva: Cahiers de la Société d'Égyptologie, 2000), 59–60.

6

Labib Habachi, "King Nebhepetre Mentuhotp: His Monuments, Place in History, Deification and Unusual Representations in the Form of Gods," MDAIK 19 (1963): 26–7, pl. 8.

7

Christine Favard-Meeks, "Face et profil dans l'iconographie 'iconographie égyptienne," OLP 23 (1992): 20; Volokhine, *La Frontalité*, 48.

8

E. Martin Burgess and Anthony J. Arkell, "The Reconstruction of the Hathor Bowl," JEA 44 (1958). See additional materials in Anthony J. Arkell, "Brief Communications: An Archaic Representation of Hathor," JEA 41 (1955).

9

Arkell, "Brief Communications," 126.

10

Arkell, "Brief Communications." See Patrick F. Houlihan, *The Birds of Ancient Egypt* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1988), 23–5, for

discussion of this bird.

11

Arkell, "Brief Communications," 126.

12

Fischer, "The Cult and Nome of the Goddess Bat," 11.

13

Henry G. Fischer, "Bat," in *LdÄ*, vol. 2, ed. Wolfgang Helck and Eberhard Otto (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1973), 631.

14

Elmar Edel, *Altägyptische Grammatik* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1955), vol. 1, §§205–11.

15

Stan Hendrickx, "The Earliest Example of Pharaonic Iconography," *Nekhen News* 17 (2005): 15.

16

Hendrickx, "Earliest Example of Pharaonic Iconography," 15.

17

Stan Hendrickx and Renée F. Friedman, "Chaos and Order: A Predynastic 'Ostrakon' from HK29A," *Nekhen News* 15 (Fall 2003): 8.

18

Hendrickx and R. F. Friedman, "Chaos and Order," 8.

19

Günter Dreyer, *Umm el-Qaab I*, Archäologische Veröffentlichungen, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Abteilung Kairo (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1998), 65; Renée F. Friedman and Stan Hendrickx, "Gebel Tjauti Rock Inscription 1," in *Theban Desert Road Survey in the Egyptian Western Desert, volume 1, Gebel Tjauti Rock Inscriptions 1–45 and Wadi el-Hôl Rock Inscriptions 1–45*, ed. John Coleman Darnell and Deborah Darnell, Oriental Institute Publications (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 16.

20

Jochem Kahl, "Das Schlagen des Feindes von Hu: Gebel Tjauti Felsinschrift 1," *GM* 192 (2003); Stan Hendrickx and Renée F. Friedman, "Gebel Tjauti Rock Inscription 1 and the Relationship between Abydos and Hierakonpolis During the Early Naqada Iii Period," *Göttinger Miszellen* 196 (2003): 196.

21

R. F. Friedman and Hendrickx, "Gebel Tjauti Rock Inscription 1," 11, 16.

22

R. F. Friedman and Hendrickx, "Gebel Tjauti Rock Inscription 1," 16. For a discussion of bovines in Predynastic and Early Dynastic iconography, see Stan Hendrickx, "Bovines in Egyptian Predynastic and Early Dynastic Iconography," in *Droughts, Food, and Culture: Econological Change*

and Food Security in Africa's Later Prehistory, ed. Fekri A. Hassan (New York: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002), esp. appendix H.

23

R. F. Friedman and Hendrickx, "Gebel Tjauti Rock Inscription 1," 16.

24

Kahl, "Das Schlagen des Feindes von Hu," 50.

25

Hendrickx and R. F. Friedman, "Gebel Tjauti Rock Inscription 1 and the Relationship," 97. See Wolfgang Helck, *Die altägyptischen Gaue*, Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients, ed. Wolfgang Röllig (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1974), 88, where he notes that the first appearance of the Bat Standard comes with Netjeraperef under Snefru in the early Fourth Dynasty.

26

Edouard Naville, "Le Dieu Bat," ZÄS 43 (1906).

27

Whitney Davis, *Masking the Blow: The Scene of Representation in Late Prehistoric Egyptian Art*, ed. James Marrow (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 165.

28

Favard-Meeks, "Face et profil dans l'iconographie égyptienne," 19 and n. 28. In note 28, Favard-Meeks notes that the ram god related to Amun does not appear as such until the Eighteenth Dynasty, a point also noted by Béatrix Midant-Reynes, *The Prehistory of Egypt: From the First Egyptians to the First Pharaohs*, trans. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 151.

29

Favard-Meeks, "Face et profil dans l'iconographie égyptienne," 19; Volokhine, *La Frontalité*, 48, 49.

30

Ulrich Hartung, "Prädyastische Siegelabrollungen aus dem Friedhof U in Abydos (Umm El-Qaab)," MDAIK 54 (1998): 200, 201, figure 22.

31

Hartung, "Prädyastische Siegelabrollungen," 212.

32

Hartung, "Prädyastische Siegelabrollungen," 200.

33

Jane A. Hill, *Cylinder Seal Glyptic in Predynastic Egypt and Neighboring Regions* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2004), 27.

34

G. A. Wainwright, "Chapter VIII: Objects Found in the Pre-Dynastic Cemetery (Gerzeh)," in *The Labyrinth Gerzeh and Mazghuneh*, ed. W. M. Flinders Petrie (London: School of Archaeology, Bernard Quaritch, 1912), 22.

35
Arkell, "Brief Communications," 126.

36
Hill, *Cylinder Seal Glyptic*, 27; Fekri Hassan, "Primeval Goddess to Divine King: The Mythogenesis of Power in the Early Egyptian State," in *The Followers of Horus: Studies Dedicated to Michael Allen Hoffman, 1944-1990*, ed. Renée F. Friedman and Barbara Adams, Egyptian Studies Association (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1992), 315.

37
Aylward M. Blackman, ed., *Middle-Egyptian Stories*, BAe, vol. 2 (Brussels: Édition de la Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1972), 38, B 271. See, for example, Fischer, "The Cult and Nome of the Goddess Bat," 11.

38
This type of reading back into earlier periods can easily lead to incorrect conclusions, as concepts about deities and their roles develop and change over time. See Midant-Reynes, *Prehistory of Egypt*, 179.

39
My translation of Volokhine, *La Frontalité*," 48.

40
Volokhine, *La Frontalité*, 48.

41
J. McKim Malville, Fred Wendorf, and Ali A. Mazar, et al., "Megaliths and Neolithic Astronomy in Southern Egypt," *Nature* 392, no. 2 (April 1998): 490.

42
James P. Lowdermilk, email message to author, September 2002.

43
The use of the word "art" here does not refer to art as the modern world understands it, created by an individual on his/her own terms, but rather to the understanding of the artisan as noted in Hendrickx, "Bovines in Egyptian Predynastic and Early Dynastic Iconography," 298, n. 1; see also Stan Hendrickx and Merel Eyckerman, "Visual Representation and State Development in Egypt," *Archéo-Nil* 22 (2012): 24, n. 2. This kind of art has a very specific purpose and meaning and is challenging to understand in a very different time, place, and culture.

44
Cal. Yr. BP refers to the calculations of the years before the present (BP) by tree-ring dating using radiocarbon calibration; the "present" here is the date chosen by scientists so there is a common understanding of time before which something may be dated, commonly 1950.

45
Dirk Huyge et al., "First Evidence of Pleistocene Rock Art in North Africa: Securing the Age of the Qurta Petroglyphs (Egypt) through OSL

Dating,” *Antiquity* 85, no. 330 (2011).

46

Arkell, “Brief Communications,” 126.

47

See Yuval Yekutieli, “Divine Royal Power,” in *In Quest of Ancient Settlements and Landscapes: Archaeological Studies in Honour of Ram Gophna*, ed. Edwin C. M. van den Brink and Eli Yanni (Tel Aviv: Ramot Publishing, 2002), 246, figure 7b, for the Sinai, and Volokhine, *La Frontalité*, 48, n. 206, for Mesopotamia. In other related discussions, while Fischer suggests in “The Cult and Nome of the Goddess Bat,” 7 and n. 1, that the goddess “may derive from Mesopotamia,” based on a similarity to some artifacts from Ur. More recently David Wengrow, in “Rethinking ‘Cattle Cults’ in Early Egypt: Towards a Prehistoric Perspective on the Narmer Palette,” *CAJ* 11, no. 1 (2001): 96, has noted that the training of cattle horns “into attractive forms” (96) “is a practice followed by herders all over the world” (100, n. 8). In a 1992 article, Harry S. Smith argues cogently for a Susan–Sumerian influence in Upper Egypt/Lower Nubia, seen in iconographic representation, most particularly among the hero/divine ruler subduing powerful animals/enemies, but he makes no reference to cattle or cattle symbols despite their ubiquitous presence in the rock art, for which see Harry S. Smith, “The Making of Egypt: A Review of the Influence of Susa and Sumer on Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia in the 4th Millennium BC,” in , *The Followers of Horus: Studies Dedicated to Michael Allen Hoffman*, ed. Renée F. Friedman and Barbara Adams, Egyptian Studies Association (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1992).

48

Arkell, “Brief Communications,” 126, where he refers to Jaroslav Cerny, *Ancient Egyptian Religion* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979; repr. of 1957), 29, for a description of Hathor coifed with two horns and the sun disk between them.

49

Hendrickx and Eyckerman, “Visual Representation and State Development,” 36, n. 27.

50

Among others, Fischer, “The Cult and Nome of the Goddess Bat,” 13, n. 45. See especially Zoffili and Clayton, *Kleidung und Schmuck im Alten Ägypten*, 32, 82–3, who refer to the heads as Hathor, emphasizing her role as mother of the king.

51

For an extensive set of examples, see Elisabeth Staehelin, *Untersuchungen zur ägyptischen Tracht im Alten Reich*, ed. Hans Wolfgang Müller and Wolfhart Westendorf, MÄS (Berlin: Verlag Bruno Hessling, 1966), 128–35, taf. xvi–xvii, xxvii, xxxix; Christiane Ziegler, “Les Statues

d'Akhethetep, propriétaire de la chapelle du Louvre,” RdÉ 48 (1997), 237–8, figures 2 and 3, pl. xix; Zoffili and Clayton, *Kleidung und Schmuck im Alten Ägypten*, 32, 82–3; Henry G. Fischer, “Old Kingdom Inscriptions in the Yale Gallery,” MIO 7, no. 3 (1960): 314–15; Alexandre Badawy, “Les Bijoux de Ankhm’ahor, au Beau Nom de Sesi,” *Gazette des beaux arts* 86 (November 1975). Valerie Selve, “Le Symbole Bat avant la troisième période intermédiaire: essai d’interprétation, Part 1,” *Discussions in Egyptology* 46 (2000). Joyce Haynes, “Amulet with the Head of the Goddess Bat,” *The Museum Year: 1990–91: The One Hundred Fifteenth Annual Report of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston* 115 (1991): 30; William Kelly Simpson, “Three Egyptian Statues of the Seventh and Sixth Centuries B.C. in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts,” *Kemi* 21 (1971): 22, figure 1; Biru Fay, “Another Statue of Montuemhat,” GM 189 (2002); Bernhard Grdseloff, “L’insigne du grand juge égyptien,” ASAÉ 40 (1940).

52

Favard-Meeks, “Face et profil dans l’iconographie égyptienne,” 31. Klaus Bauer, *Rank and Title in the Old Kingdom: The Structure of the Egyptian Administration in the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 16–18, 22–3, provides the title strings of ten individuals who list the *hqꜥ bꜥt* title among those they carried. See also Fischer, “The Cult and Nome of the Goddess Bat,” 12–13.

53

Fischer, “The Cult and Nome of the Goddess Bat,” 12; Fischer, “Bat,” 631.

54

Fischer, “The Cult and Nome of the Goddess Bat,” 12–13.

55

Fischer, “The Cult and Nome of the Goddess Bat,” 11, n. 28. He refers to this neck as a “frustrum,” perhaps a typo for the actual term, “frustum.”

56

Hendrickx and R. F. Friedman, “Gebel Tjauti Rock Inscription 1 and the Relationship,” 96.

57

Hendrickx and R. F. Friedman, “Gebel Tjauti Rock Inscription 1 and the Relationship,” 97.

58

Jochem Kahl, “Das Schlagen des Feindes von Hu: Gebel Tjauti Felsinschrift 1,” GM 192 (2003): 50.

59

See Hendrickx and R. F. Friedman, “Gebel Tjauti Rock Inscription 1 and the Relationship,” 95–9, for a discussion of why they understand Kahl’s analysis as erroneous.

60

Hendrickx and R. F. Friedman, “Gebel Tjauti Rock Inscription 1 and the

Relationship,” 100.

61

Hendrickx, “Earliest Example of Pharaonic Iconography,” 15.

62

Florence Dunn Friedman, “The Underground Relief Panels of King Djoser at the Step Pyramid Complex,” JARCE 32 (1995): 3; Rolf Gundlach, *Der Pharao und sein Staat, Die Grundlegung der ägyptischen Königsideologie im 4. und 3. Jahrtausend* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1998), 75.

63

F. D. Friedman, “The Underground Relief Panels of King Djoser,” 3.

64

Gundlach, *Der Pharao und sein Staat*, 75.

65

Fischer, “The Cult and Nome of the Goddess Bat,” 12.

66

George A. Reisner, *The Early Dynastic Cemeteries of Naga-Ed-Dêr. Part I* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1908), 243, pl. 6, #2. Cyril Aldred, *Jewels of the Pharaohs: Egyptian Jewelry of the Dynastic Period* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 175, pl. 2; Cyril Aldred, *Jewels of the Pharaohs: Egyptian Jewelry of the Dynastic Period (Abridged)* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1978), 113 and pl. 2. In the abridged edition, Aldred has corrected the descriptions of both animals in the plate.

67

Fischer, “Bat,” 631.

68

Fischer, “The Cult and Nome of the Goddess Bat,” 11.

69

Fischer, “The Cult and Nome of the Goddess Bat,” 8.

70

Fischer, “The Cult and Nome of the Goddess Bat,” 16–17.

71

Habachi, “King Nebhepetre Mentuhotp: His Monuments,” 26–7, pl. 8.

72

Marleen Reynders, “Names and Types of the Egyptian Sistrum,” in *Proceedings of the 7th International Congress of Egyptologists, Cambridge, 3–9, September 1995*, ed. Christopher J. Eyre (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1998), 950; Marleen Reynders, “Sšš.t and šm: Names and Types of the Egyptian Sistrum,” in *Egyptian Religion: The Last Thousand Years, Part II: Studies Dedicated to the Memory of Jan Quaegebeur*, ed. Willy Clarysse, Antoon Schoors, and Willems Harco (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1998), 1020. Note that these two articles, although appearing in different publications, are almost exactly alike.

73

Indeed the Mentuhotep example and evidence of continued use of the *sš.t* sistrum through Egyptian history, along with the interesting stela from the Nineteenth Dynasty Deir el-Medina depicting Bukanefptah worshipping Hathor in her anthropomorphic form and as a *sš.t* sistrum, leads me to question the assimilation, that is the absorption, of Bat by Hathor, as suggested by Reynders, “Names and Types of the Egyptian Sistrum,” 950–1 and figure 3; and/or “*Sš.t* and *šm*: Names and Types of the Egyptian Sistrum,” 1021. It is important to note, however, that an instrument of cult does not equate with assimilation, and the Mentuhotep example, along with the later Deir el-Medina examples, suggests a continued independence of the two deities while at the same time presenting a clear association of the two.

74

Geraldine Pinch, *Votive Offerings to Hathor* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, Ashmolean Museum, 1993), 157 and pl. 20; for more, see “EA43071” at the British Museum: Collection Online, http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=162118&partId=1&searchText=43071&page=8. Pinch’s index under Bat provides additional objects and locations, 396.

75

Helck, *Die altägyptischen Gaue*, 89.

76

Henry G. Fischer, *Dendera in the Third Millennium B.C.* (New York: J. J. Augustin, 1968), 185–6.

77

See note 5 above for further discussion.

78

Fischer, “The Cult and Nome of the Goddess Bat,” 11.

79

Aldred, *Jewels of the Pharaohs*, 185.

80

Favard-Meeks, “Face et profil dans l’iconographie égyptienne,” 28–9, pl. II, figure 5; see Aldred, *Jewels of the Pharaohs*, pls. 25 and 26, 185.

81

Lana Troy, *Patterns of Queenship in Ancient Egyptian Myth and History*, ed. Rostislav Holthoer and Tullia Linders (Uppsala, Sweden: Uppsala University, 1986), 64, 79, 81, 84. 189, B3/4.

82

The epithet reflected in the Coffin Texts, however, with *tp Hr m Stš*, “the head of Horus with that of Seth” (CT IV 140 b–c) and later as Rößler-Köhler summarizes; Ursula Rößler-Köhler, *Kapital 17 des Ägyptischen*

Totenbuches. Untersuchungen zur Textgeschichte und Funktion eines Textes der altägyptischen Totenliteratur, ed. Friedrich Junge, GOF (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1979), 253.

83

Favard-Meeks, “Face et profil dans l’iconographie égyptienne,” 28–9.

84

As, for example, indicated by Volokhine, *La Frontalité*, 61.

85

Space constraints prevent delving further into various iconographic representations designated as Bat or as Hathor that puzzle me or into the discussions of the *ḥqꜣ bꜣt* pendant worn by so many over the millennia of Egyptian history. I have many questions about the former. Further, the relation of the Bat symbol to the king and others in the late Predynastic and Early Dynastic Periods appears to be a critical and untouched question.

Excursus 2: Cattle

1

This excursus simply summarizes the importance of cattle in late Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt using enough of the many resources to provide a background understanding of why both Hathor and Bat are persistently related to cattle. One solid and readily available resource, albeit dating from very early in the current millennium, is Stan Hendrickx, “Bovines in Egyptian Predynastic and Early Dynastic Iconography,” in *Droughts, Food, and Culture: Ecological Change and Food Security in Africa’s Later Prehistory*, ed. Fekri A. Hassan (New York: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002). For much of the current research on prehistoric Egypt, its settlement, flora and fauna, and much more, see the many, often cited articles in Fred Wendorf, Romuald Schild, and Associates, eds., *Holocene Settlement of the Egyptian Sahara: The Archaeology of Nabta Playa*, vol. 1 (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2001). Do note that in recent scholarship, some of the Wendorf team’s work has come under considerable criticism, some of which appears in materials cited in this excursus.

2

John Coleman Darnell, “The Deserts,” in *The Egyptian World*, ed. Toby A. H. Wilkinson (London: Routledge, 2007), 29–34.

3

Dirk Hugue, Alan Watchman, Morgan De Dapper, et al., “Dating Egypt’s Oldest ‘Art’: AMS 14C Age Determinations of Rock Varnishes Covering Petroglyphs at El-Hosh (Upper Egypt),” *Antiquity* 75, no. 287 (2001); Dirk Hugue, “Rock Art,” in *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, ed. Willeke

Wendrich, https://escholarship.org/search?q=Huyge&searchType=nelt_uee&searchUnitType=series, which provides a comprehensive overview of rock art; Dirk Huyge, Dimitri A. G. Vandenberghe, Morgan De Dapper, et al., “First Evidence of Pleistocene Rock Art in North Africa: Securing the Age of the Qurta Petroglyphs (Egypt) through OSL Dating,” *Antiquity* 85, no. 330 (2011); John Coleman Darnell, “Iconographic Attraction, Iconographic Syntax, and Tableaux of Royal Ritual Power in the Pre- and Proto-Dynastic Rock Inscriptions of the Theban Western Desert,” *Archéo-Nil* 19 (2009): 83; Tony Judd, “Cattle Petroglyphs in the Eastern Desert of Egypt,” in *Current Research in Egyptology 2006: Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Symposium, University of Oxford 2006*, ed. Maria Cannata (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2007), 135–6.

4

See, for example, Francis David Lankester, “Dating the Petroglyphs of Egypt’s Central Eastern Desert,” in *The Signs of Which Times? Chronological and Palaeoenvironmental Issues in the Rock Art of Northern Africa*, ed. Dirk Huyge, Francis L. Van Noten, and Danielle Swinne (Brussels: Académie Royale des Sciences d’Outre-Mer, 2012).

5

Huyge, Vandenberghe, De Dapper, et al., “First Evidence of Pleistocene Rock Art in North Africa.”

6

John Reader, *Africa* (New York: Vintage, 1997), 151. An excellent discussion of environmental factors appears in Douglas J. Brewer, *Ancient Egypt: Foundations of a Civilization* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2005), chapter 3. See, for example, 70, no. 3 (2008): 394 and 396, mention “short occupations” and “several occupations, thus strongly suggesting movement in and out of the area.

7

Fred Wendorf and Romuald Schild, “Conclusions,” in *Holocene Settlement of the Egyptian Sahara: The Archaeology of Nabta Playa*, ed. Fred Wendorf, Romuald Schild, and Associates (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2001); Fred Wendorf and Romuald Schild, “Nabta Playa and Its Role in Northeastern African Prehistory,” *J. Anthro. Archaeol.* 17 (1998); Fred Wendorf and Romuald Schild, “Introduction,” in *Holocene Settlement of the Egyptian Sahara: The Archaeology of Nabta Playa*, ed. Fred Wendorf, Romuald Schild, and Associates (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2001), 1.

8

Elena Marinova, Veerle Linseele, and Pierre Vermeersch, “Holocene Environment and Subsistence Patterns near the Tree Shelter, Red Sea Mountains, Egypt,” *Quaternary RES.* See, for example, Pierre M. Vermeersch, Veerle Linseele, Elena Marinova, et al., “Early and Middle

Holocene Human Occupation of the Egyptian Eastern Desert: Sodmein Cave,” AAR 32, no. 3 (2015): 466 and 496, speak of movement in and out of the area.

9

Mauro Cremaschi and Savino Di Lernia, “Holocene Climatic Changes and Cultural Dynamics in the Libyan Sahara,” AAR 16, no. 4 (1999); Mary M. A. McDonald, “Early African Pastoralism: View from Dakhleh Oasis (South Central Egypt),” J. Anthro. Archaeol. 17 (1998), 126–7; Fred Wendorf and Romauld Schild, “The Western Desert During the 5th and 4th Millennia BC: The Late and Final Neolithic in the Nabta-Kiseiba Area,” *Archéo-Nil* 14 (December 2004); Veerle Linseele, “Did Specialized Pastoralism Develop Differently in Africa than in the Near East? An Example from the West African Sahel,” J. World Prehist. 23, no. 4 (2010); Barbara E. Barich, “The Introduction of Neolithic Resources to North Africa: A Discussion in Light of the Holocene Research between Egypt and Libya,” Quat. Int. 410 (2016); Simon Holdaway, Rebecca Phillipps, Joshua Emmitt, et al., “The Fayum Revisited: Reconsidering the Role of the Neolithic Package, Fayum North Shore, Egypt,” Quat. Int. 410 (2016); Veerle Linseele, Simon J. Holdaway, and Willeke Wendrich, “The Earliest Phase of Introduction of Southwest Asian Domesticated Animals into Africa: New Evidence from the Fayum Oasis in Egypt And Its Implications,” Quat. Int. 412 (2016); Mary M. A. McDonald, “The Pattern of Neolithization in Dakhleh Oasis in the Eastern Sahara,” Quat. Int. 410 (2016): 182–5.

10

The Farfara, Bahryia/Bahariya, Siwa, and Qara oases are among the other oases in the Western Desert.

11

Fred Wendorf and Romauld Schild, “Are the Early Holocene Cattle in the Eastern Sahara Domestic or Wild?,” *Evol. Anthropol.* 3, no. 4 (1994): 119; Wendorf and Schild, “Nabta Playa and Its Role in Northeastern African Prehistory,” 101, 108; Maciej Jórdeczka, Halina Królik, Mirosław Masojć, et al., “Hunter-Gatherer Cattle-Keeper of Early Neolithic El Adam Type from Nabta Playa: Latest Discoveries from Site E-06-1,” AAR 30 (2013): 278; Toby A. H. Wilkinson, *Genesis of the Pharaohs: Dramatic New Discoveries That Rewrite the Origins of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2003), 104–5.

12

McDonald, “Pattern of Neolithization,” 182–5; McDonald, “Early African Pastoralism,” 126–8; Veerle Linseele, Wim Van Neer, Sofie Thys, et al., “New Archaeozoological Data from the Fayum ‘Neolithic’ with a Critical Assessment of the Evidence for Early Stock Keeping in Egypt,” *PLoS ONE* 9, no. 10 (2014); Linseele, Holdaway, and Wendrich, “The Earliest Phase of Introduction of Southwest Asian Domesticated Animals into Africa”;

Juan Carlos Moreno Garcia, "Invaders or Just Herders? Libyans in Egypt in the Third and Second Millennium BCE," *World Archaeology* 46, no. 4 (2014): 611.

13

T. A. H. Wilkinson, *Genesis of the Pharaohs*, 104–05.

14

For example, Wendorf and Schild, "Conclusions," in *Holocene Settlement of the Egyptian Sahara: The Archaeology of Nabta Playa*, ed. Fred Wendorf, Romuald Schild, and Associates (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2001), 656.

15

Fiona Marshall and Elisabeth Hildebrand, "Cattle Before Crops: The Beginnings of Food Production in Africa," *J. World Prehist.* 16, no. 2 (2002): 109–16. See also Linseele, Holdaway, and Wendrich, "The Earliest Phase of Introduction of Southwest Asian Domesticated Animals into Africa," 12, who suggest the late seventh/early sixth millennium; Barich, "Introduction of Neolithic Resources to North Africa," 206–7, prefers the late seventh millennium (6200–6000 cal BC); and Jórdeczka, Królik, Masojć, et al., "Hunter-Gatherer Cattle-Keeper of Early Neolithic El Adam," 280, settle on 7200 BCE; while Linseele, Van Neer, Thys, et al., "New Archaeozoological Data," 14, suggest secure evidence dating to the late seventh/early sixth millennium. David Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt: Social Transformations in North-East Africa, 10,000 to 2,640 BC*, ed. Norman Yoffee, Cambridge World Archaeology (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 47–9.

16

Linseele, "Did Specialized Pastoralism Develop Differently," 52–3; Linseele, Holdaway, and Wendrich, "The Earliest Phase of Introduction of Southwest Asian Domesticated Animals into Africa," 12; Holdaway, Phillipps, Emmitt, et al., "The Fayum Revisited," 173–4; Marshall and Hildebrand, "Cattle Before Crops," 130.

17

Wendorf and Schild, "The Western Desert"; Marshall and Hildebrand, "Cattle Before Crops," 111–14.

18

Wendorf and Schild, "Nabta Playa and Its Role in Northeastern African Prehistory," 97. BP/cal B.P./cal bp each refer to years calculated via radiocarbon dating before 1950, a date set by scientists for convenience. Various other dates are also given, for example "9500 bp," in Wendorf and Schild, "Introduction," in *Holocene Settlement of the Egyptian Sahara: The Archaeology of Nabta Playa*, ed. Fred Wendorf, Romuald Schild, and Associates (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2001), 2; "9500 bp" in Achilles Gautier, "The Early to Late Neolithic Archeofaunas from Nabta and Bir Kiseiba," in *Holocene Settlement of the Egyptian Sahara*:

The Archaeology of Nabta Playa, ed. Fred Wendorf, Achilles Gautier, and Associates (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2001), 633; “late 9th/8th millennium” in Linseele, Van Neer, Thys, et al., “New Archaeozoological Data,” 14.

19

Wendorf and Schild, “Nabta Playa and Its Role in Northeastern African Prehistory,” 108–9. The use of “cal BC” here is, in fact, what Wendorf and Schild use, meaning calculated years before Christ as contrasted to “cal BP” or “cal bp” meaning calculated years before the present, that is, before 1950.

20

Wendorf and Schild, “Nabta Playa and Its Role in Northeastern African Prehistory,” 108–9.

21

Linseele, Holdaway, and Wendrich, “The Earliest Phase of Introduction of Southwest Asian Domesticated Animals into Africa,” 12, suggest the late seventh/early sixth millennium; Barich, “Introduction of Neolithic Resources to North Africa,” 206–7, prefers the late seventh millennium (6200–6000 cal BC); and Jórdeczka, Królik, Masojć, et al., “Hunter-Gatherer Cattle-Keepers of Early Neolithic El Adam,” 280, settle on 7200 BCE; while Linseele, Van Neer, Thys, et al., “New Archaeozoological Data,” 14, suggest secure evidence dating to the late seventh/early sixth millennium. See also for brief discussions, Marshall and Hildebrand, “Cattle Before Crops,” 109–16, and Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt*, 47–9.

22

Wendorf and Schild, “Conclusions,” in *Holocene Settlement of the Egyptian Sahara: The Archaeology of Nabta Playa*, ed. Fred Wendorf, Romuald Schild, and Associates (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2001), 656; Frauke Stock and Diane Gifford-Gonzalez, “Genetics and African Cattle Domestication,” *AAR* 30, no. 1 (March 2013): 59–61.

23

See, for example, Achilles Gautier, “The Evidence for the Earliest Livestock in North Africa: Or Adventures with Large Bovids, Ovicaprids, Dogs and Pigs,” in Hassan, *Droughts, Food and Culture*, 195.

24

See, for example, Gautier, “Evidence for the Earliest Livestock,” in Hassan, *Droughts, Food and Culture*, 196–8.

25

See, for example, Gautier, “The Early to Late Neolithic Archeofaunas from Nabta and Bir Kiseiba,” in *Holocene Settlement of the Egyptian Sahara: The Archaeology of Nabta Playa*, ed. Fred Wendorf, Romuald Schild, and Associates (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2001), 633–4; Wendorf and Schild, “Conclusions,” in *Holocene Settlement of the*

Egyptian Sahara: The Archaeology of Nabta Playa, ed. Fred Wendorf, Romuald Schild, and Associates (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2001), 657.

26

Stock and Gifford-Gonzalez, "Genetics and African Cattle Domestication," 67; Barich, "Introduction of Neolithic Resources to North Africa," 206–7.

27

For example, Jared E. Decker, Stephanie D. McKay, Megan M. Rolf, et al., "Worldwide Patterns of Ancestry, Divergence, and Admixture in Domesticated Cattle," *PLOS Genetics* 10, no. 3 (2014).

28

Barich, "Introduction of Neolithic Resources to North Africa," 206–7.

29

Barich, "Introduction of Neolithic Resources to North Africa," 206–7.

30

Marshall and Hildebrand, "Cattle Before Crops," 109–14; Barbara E. Barich, "Cultural Responses to Climatic Changes in North Africa: Beginning and Spread of Pastoralism in the Sahara," in Hassan, *Droughts, Food and Culture*, 210, 220; Fekri Hassan, "Palaeoclimate, Food and Culture Change in Africa: An Overview," in Hassan, *Droughts, Food and Culture*, 11–19; Linseele, Holdaway, and Wendrich, "The Earliest Phase of Introduction of Southwest Asian Domesticated Animals into Africa," 12; Gautier, "Evidence for the Earliest Livestock," 200, in Hassan, *Droughts, Food and Culture*.

31

W. Wendrich, R. Ervin Taylor, and John Southon, "Dating Stratified Settlement Sites at Kom K and Kom W: Fifth Millennium BCE Radiocarbon Ages for the Fayum Neolithic," *Nuclear Instruments and Methods in Physics Research B* 268 (2010); Barich, "Introduction of Neolithic Resources to North Africa," 210. See also Linseele, "Did Specialized Pastoralism Develop Differently," 52–3; Linseele, Holdaway, and Wendrich, "The Earliest Phase of Introduction of Southwest Asian Domesticated Animals into Africa," 12; Holdaway, Phillipps, Emmitt, et al., "The Fayum Revisited," 173–4; Marshall and Hildebrand, "Cattle Before Crops," 122.

32

Holdaway, Phillipps, Emmitt, et al., "The Fayum Revisited," 179. See also McDonald, "Pattern of Neolithization," 182–5.

33

Linseele, Van Neer, Thys, et al., "New Archaeozoological Data"; Linseele, Holdaway, and Wendrich, "The Earliest Phase of Introduction of Southwest Asian Domesticated Animals into Africa"; McDonald, "Pattern of Neolithization," 182–5.

Wendorf and Schild, "Conclusions," in *Holocene Settlement of the Egyptian Sahara: The Archaeology of Nabta Playa*, ed. Fred Wendorf, Romuald Schild, and Associates (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2001), 653, 657, though it is clear that they are not used for meat, as Vermeersch, Linseele, Marinova, et al., "Early and Middle Holocene Human Occupation," 497, also note. See also V. Linseele, E. Marinova, W. Van Neer, and P. M. Vermeersch, "Sites with Holocene Dung Deposits in the Eastern Desert of Egypt: Visited by Herders?" *Journal of Arid Environments* 74 (2010): 826, where the authors speak of the lack of bones of domestics as not serving as a food resource but rather "as a kind of 'food reserve on the hoof' "; see also Marshall and Hildebrand, "Cattle Before Crops," 114.

Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt*, 48; Vermeersch, Linseele, Marinova, et al., "Early and Middle Holocene Human Occupation," 497. It is important to note here the differences between the presence of and utilization of cattle in the Eastern Sahara and the Eastern Desert.

M. J. C. Walker et al., "Formal Subdivision of the Holocene Series/Epoch: A Discussion Paper by a Working Group of Intimate (Integration of Ice-Core, Marine and Terrestrial Records) and the Subcommission on Quaternary Stratigraphy (International Commission on Stratigraphy)," *Journal of Quaternary Science* 27, no. 7 (2012): 651–3, 656.

Andrew H. Gordon and Calvin W. Schwabe, "Predynastic Egypt as 'Cattle Culture,'" in *The Quick and the Dead: Biomedical Theory in Ancient Egypt*, ed. Andrew H. Gordon and Calvin W. Schwab (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 42–3, 49.

Julie Dunne, Richard P. Evershed, Mélanie Salque, et al., "Letter Research: First Dairying in Green Saharan Africa in the Fifth Millennium BC," *Nature* 486, June 21 (2012): 392; Julie Dunne, Richard P. Evershed, Lucy Cramp, et al., "The Beginnings of Dairying as Practised by Pastoralists in 'Green' Saharan Africa in the 5th Millennium BC," *Documenta Praehistorica* 40 (2013): 121–7. For Southwest Asia, Stock and Clifford-Gonzalez, "Genetics and African Cattle Domestication," 62, observe the first appearance of the use of milk in the seventh millennium BCE.

Vermeersch, Linseele, Marinova, et al., "Early and Middle Holocene Human Occupation," 497. However, no explanation is provided—or is known to me—that addresses the vast time when domesticated cattle are first evident, thus serving as a food source, a "walking larder," as early as the late seventh or early sixth millennium, and when we have

the first known physical evidence for milk and milk products. For what purpose might they have been domesticated? And although various reports suggest that the prestige of controlling cattle underlies their value, an example of which appears in Stan Hendrickx, John Coleman Darnell, and Maria Carmela Gatto, "The Earliest Representations of Royal Power in Egypt: The Rock Drawings of Nag el-Hamdulab (Aswan)," *Antiquity* 86 (2012): 1073–81, with particular discussion of cattle on 1077 and 1079 with figure 6.

40

Linseele, "Did Specialized Pastoralism Develop Differently," 47.

41

Douglas J. Brewer, "Agriculture and and Animal Husbandry," in Wilkinson, *The Egyptian World*, 141.

42

Wendorf and Schild, "Conclusions," in *Holocene Settlement of the Egyptian Sahara: The Archaeology of Nabta Playa*, ed. Fred Wendorf, Romuald Schild, and Associates (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2001), 653.

43

Wendorf and Schild, "Nabta Playa and Its Role in Northeastern African Prehistory," 108.

44

Alex Applegate, Achilles Gautier, and Steven Duncan, "The North Tumuli of the Nabta Late Neolithic Ceremonial Complex," in *Holocene Settlement of the Egyptian Sahara: The Archaeology of Nabta Playa*, ed. Fred Wendorf, Romuald Schild, and Associates (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2001), 487–8.

45

David Wengrow, "Rethinking 'Cattle Cults' in Early Egypt: Towards a Prehistoric Perspective on the Narmer Palette," *CAJ* 11, no. 1 (2001), esp. 98, presents a solid discussion of why we should look at the people's relationship with cattle as more than a cult.

46

Wendorf and Schild, "Conclusions," in *Holocene Settlement of the Egyptian Sahara: The Archaeology of Nabta Playa*, ed. Fred Wendorf, Romuald Schild, and Associates (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2001), 657; Gordon and Schwabe, "Predynastic Egypt as 'Cattle Culture,'" in Gordon and Schwabe, *The Quick and the Dead*, 52–3. In the early twenty-first century, scholars have become aware that such reading back really proves nothing about the past. For an example, see Wengrow, "Rethinking 'Cattle Cults' in Early Egypt," 92; and Moreno Garcia, "Invaders or Just Herders?" 611.

47

Fred Wendorf and Halina Króik, "Site E-96-1: The Complex Structures or

Shrines,” in *Holocene Settlement of the Egyptian Sahara: The Archaeology of Nabta Playa*, ed. Fred Wendorf, Romuald Schild, and Associates (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2001), 503.

48

Wendorf and Schild, “Conclusions,” in *Holocene Settlement of the Egyptian Sahara: The Archaeology of Nabta Playa*, ed. Fred Wendorf, Romuald Schild, and Associates (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2001), 662.

49

Linseele, Van Neer, Thys, et al., “New Archaeozoological Data,” 13–14. See Susan Redford and Donald B. Redford, “Graffiti and Petroglyphs Old and New from the Eastern Desert,” *JARCE* 26 (1989), for descriptions of petroglyphs, some of cattle, in the Eastern Desert.

50

Béatrix Midant-Reynes, *The Prehistory of Egypt: From the First Egyptians to the First Pharaohs*, trans. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 27, 37, 99; Vermeersch, Linseele, Marinova, et al., “Early and Middle Holocene Human Occupation,” 466.

51

Vermeersch, Linseele, Marinova, et al., “Early and Middle Holocene Human Occupation,” 487; Linseele, Marinova, Van Neer, and Vermeersch, “Sites with Holocene Dung Deposits,” 825–7; Elena Marinova, Veerle Linseele, and Pierre Vermeersch, “Holocene Environment and Subsistence Patterns near the Tree Shelter, Red Sea Mountains, Egypt,” *Quaternary Research* 70, no. 3 (2008): 396.

52

Redford and Redford, “Graffiti and Petroglyphs,” 3.

53

T. A. H. Wilkinson, *Genesis of the Pharaohs*, 138, and for a review of some of the previous investigations, chapter 1. Some of his conclusions have come under criticism; see Toby A. H. Wilkinson, Karl Butzer, Dirk Huyge, et al., “Review Feature: A Review of *Genesis of the Pharaohs: Dramatic New Discoveries That Rewrite the Origins of Ancient Egypt*, by Toby Wilkinson,” *CAJ* 14, no. 1 (2004): 113–35, in which Wilkinson also has an introduction and a response to the commentators.

54

Dirk Huyge and Dimitri A. G. Vandenberghe, “Confirming the Pleistocene Age of the Qurta Rock Art, Egyptian Archaeology,” *Bulletin of The Egypt Exploration Society* 39 (2011); Dirk Huyge et al., “First Evidence of Pleistocene Rock Art in North Africa: Securing the Age of the Qurta Petroglyphs (Egypt) through OSL Dating,” *Antiquity* 85, no. 330 (2011); Dirk Huyge et al., “Dating Egypt’s Oldest ‘Art’: AMS 14c Age Determinations of Rock Varnishes Covering Petroglyphs at El-Hosh (Upper Egypt),” *Antiquity* 75, no. 287 (2001). Lankester, “Dating the

55

Some recent work has begun to discuss the content of the rock art in relation to the culture, for example, John Coleman Darnell, "Iconographic Attraction, Iconographic Syntax, and Tableaux of Royal Ritual Power in the Pre- and Proto-Dynastic Rock Inscriptions of the Theban Western Desert," *Archéo-Nil* 19 (2009); Stan Hendrickx, John Coleman Darnell, and Maria Carmela Gatto, "The Earliest Representations of Royal Power in Egypt: The Rock Drawings of Nag El-Hamdulab (Aswan)," *Antiquity* 86 (2012); and Francis David Lankester, "Predynastic Egyptian Rock Art as Evidence for Early Elites' Rite of Passage," *Afrique: Archéologie & Arts* 12 (2016).

56

Stock and Gifford-Gonzalez, "Genetics and African Cattle Domestication," 59, state specifically that cattle need an average of 25 liters of water per day for maintenance and if lactating nearly 30 liters per day.

57

Moreno Garcia, "Invaders or Just Herders?" 614; Juan Carlos Moreno Garcia, "*Hwt jh(w)t*, the Administration of the Western Delta and the 'Libyan Question' in the Third Millennium BC," *JEA* 101 (2015): 7680, 97–98, 104. In both articles, he notes economic exchanges across various of the desert areas both east and west including into the southern Levant and the Mediterranean.

58

Fred Wendorf and J. McKim Malville, "The Megalithic Alignments," in *Holocene Settlement of the Egyptian Sahara: The Archaeology of Nabta Playa*, ed. Fred Wendorf, Romuald Schild, and Associates (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2001), 498–502. See also Wendorf and Schild, "The Western Desert," 21.

59

Wendorf and Malville, "The Megalithic Alignments," 502.

60

Heiko Reimer, "Lessons in Landscape Learning: The Dawn of Long-Distance Travel and Navigation in Egypt's Western Desert from Prehistoric to Old Kingdom Times," in *Desert Road Archaeology in Ancient Egypt and Beyond*, ed. Frank Förster and Heiko Reimer, *Africa Praehistorica* (Cologne: Heinrich-Barth-Institut, 2013), 83–4.

61

David Fabre, *Seafaring in Ancient Egypt* (London: Periplus, 2005), 7. See also Cyprian Broodbank, *The Making of the Middle Sea: A History of the Mediterranean from the Beginning to the Emergence of the Classical World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 329.

62

As we move to Nut in the next chapter and then to Isis after that, we will see them each very closely related to stars, even as Isis's spouse Osiris is also related to a star.

63

A good argument might be made for night mobility, with stars—perhaps via such special configurations as that seen on Bat's head—serving as a kind of guide.

64

Nicholas Millet, "Valley and Desert: The Two Worlds of the Egyptian," in *Man in Nature*, ed. Louis D. Levine (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1975), 34–5.

65

Susan Tower Hollis, "Hathor, Mistress of Byblos," in *Tenth International Congress of Egyptologists, University of the Aegean, Rhodes 22–29 May 2008*, ed. Panagiotis Kousoulis and Nikolaos Lazaridis, (Bristol, CT: Peeters, 2015), 1149.

66

Schafik Allam, *Beiträge zum Hathorkult (Bis zum Ende des Mittleren Reiches)* (Berlin: Verlag Bruno Hessling, 1963), 132, n. 4; Ramses Moftah, "Die uralte Sykomore und andere Erscheinungen der Hathor," *ZÄS* 92 (1965): 44–5; C. J. Bleeker, *Hathor and Thoth: Two Key Figures of the Ancient Egyptian Religion* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), 47–8.

67

Stan Hendrickx and Merel Eyckerman, "Visual Representation and State Development in Egypt," *Archéo-Nil* 22 (2012): 36, n. 27.

68

Wendorf and Schild, "Conclusions," in *Holocene Settlement of the Egyptian Sahara: The Archaeology of Nabta Playa*, ed. Fred Wendorf, Romuald Schild, and Associates (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2001), 656.

3 Nut

1

For my translations of the Pyramid Texts, I have used James P. Allen, *A New Concordance* (Providence: Brown University, 2013), with its hieroglyphic texts of all known Pyramid Texts and their transliterations, although my initial work used the hieroglyphic volumes of Kurt Sethe, *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1969), vols. 1 and 2. In my work, I have consulted the translations of R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (Warminster, UK: Aris & Phillips Ltd., 1986) and James P. Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 2nd ed., Writings from the

Ancient World (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), and occasionally those of Claude Carrier, *Textes des Pyramides de l'Égypte ancienne* (Paris: Édition Cybele, 2009–10). Please note that because the very largest number of texts from this corpus come from kings' tombs, I use the masculine pronoun in discussion.

2

For discussion of “mortuary” and “funerary” as adjectives, see Harold M. Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts: Typology and Disposition*, ed. Wolfgang Schenkel, Antonio Loprieno, and Joachim Friedrich Quack (Boston: Brill, 2012), vol. 1, 2, n. 5.

3

See Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, (2015), 349, for a slightly fuller description. For a brief essay about the context of the ꜥh, see James P. Allen, *Middle Egyptian: An Introduction to the Language and Culture of Hieroglyphs*, 3rd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), Essay 8.

4

See Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 207, (2015), n. 116, where he observes this metaphor as indicating impregnation.

5

In translations of these texts, NN is the customary designation for the name of the king in any given text, most notably when the text appears to be the same or present a very close variant in two or more tombs. Alternatively, of course, the translator may choose for one reason or another to use the actual name of the king from whose tomb that variant derives. For example, this particular text appears in the pyramids of Teti, Pepi I, Merenre, and Pepi II, and so it might be translated with either the generic NN or the name of the particular king (or queen) from whose tomb it came.

6

Traditionally, Seth is the consummate enemy of Osiris, killing him in order to gain the throne. While the theme persists throughout the Pyramid Texts and other mortuary materials, its clearest presentations appears in J. Gwyn Griffiths, ed., trans., commentary, *Plutarch's “De Iside et Osiride”* (Cambridge: University of Wales Press, 1970), chapters 12–19. The reader may wish to consider the story of the film and later Broadway show *The Lion King* in relation to the Osiris–Seth myth.

7

Faulkner, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 119, n. 7, states, “The interior of the lid of the sarcophagus, as a simulacrum of the sky, was sacred to the sky-goddess Nut.”

8

This text is a variant of PT 306.

9

As Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, (2015), 350, explains, the *ba* (*bꜣ*) comprises the essential non-physical being of persons, what is not uncommonly referred to as the soul or personality. See Allen, *Middle Egyptian*, Essay 7, for a discussion about the ancient Egyptians' conception of human nature and the *bꜣ*.

10

The hieroglyph here is the same glyph as is used for *bꜣ*ty, the one used in the title *nswt-bꜣ*ty, designating the king and pointing to his Lower (northern) Egyptian relationship. Quite possibly, the reference here points to the often-mentioned relationship of Nut with Heliopolis, itself a Lower Egyptian town.

11

The titles in small caps are those given by Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*.

12

For this concept, see particularly R. O. Faulkner, "The King and the Star-Religion in the Pyramid Texts," JNES 25, no. 3 (1966): 160–1.

13

Nut's place as the sky, relative to Geb as earth, locates her in the second generation of deities in the Heliopolitan Ennead, the nine gods known from that northern Egyptian town since the Old Kingdom (c. 2670–2200). In the full narrative, first told in narrative form by Plutarch in the second century CE, the original deity, Atum or Atum-Re, generated Shu, air/light/life—eventually to be understood as a moving force in the cosmogony—and Tefnut, his counterpart, generated moisture. They in turn bore Geb and Nut, who in their turn bore Osiris, Isis, Seth, and Nephthys, the active deities. In time, Osiris and Isis bore Horus, though there is a narrative in which Horus is a child of Geb and Nut. See Griffiths, *Plutarch's "De Iside et Osiride."*

14

Tiziana Martinelli, "Geb et Nout dans les Textes des Pyramides, Essai de compréhension du caractère masculin de Geb et de la terre ainsi que de caractère féminin de Nout et du ciel," BSEG 18 (1994): 61–80.

15

Frank Miosi, "Some Aspects of Geb in the Pyramid Texts," BES 10 (1989/1990): 101–7.

16

H. te Velde, "The Theme of the Separation of Heaven and Earth in Egyptian Mythology," *Studia Aegyptiaca* III (1977): 161–79.

17

Miosi, "Some Aspects of Geb in the Pyramid Texts," 102.

18

Teti's sarcophagus is the only royal one from the old Kingdom with

texts written on it, and as Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, states, “PT 1–2 are on the exterior of the lid and PT 3–7 on the interior of the sarcophagus (PT 6 on the east wall, PT 7 west, PT 4 north, PT 5 south, and PT 3 on the bottom),” (2015), 98, n. 2.

19

The ancient Egyptians did not distinguish generations by title, so a grandfather in modern parlance is simply father in their vocabulary, and the same with grandmother, which is just mother, and so on.

20

I used Allen’s online *Concordance* for these texts found in Pepi I and II and Queen Iput and the line numbers Allen gives there. The availability of new materials since Sethe’s work and even Faulkner’s work has led to differences of both text and line numbering by Allen in his much more recent work, in which he numbers it PT 716 in contrast to Faulkner’s PT 719, while Sethe simply does not have it.

21

Miosi, “Some Aspects of Geb in the Pyramid Texts,” 102, n. 10.

22

Daniel Arpagaus, “Kein Sex Für Geb und Nut—Kurze Anmerkungen zu Einer Passage der Pyramidentexte §§1321 a+c,” GM 245. Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 174; Faulkner, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 208.

23

Pyramid Texts 429–34 are all addressed to Nut by Geb, and the following spell, PT 435, comprises Nut’s response to him. Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, (2015), 204, n. 14.

24

See also PT 368, §638a; PT 588, §1607a.

25

Wadi el-Natron is the location in the desert west of the Delta from which natron used in the process of dehydration for mummification was obtained.

26

Adolf Erman and Hermann Grapow, *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache* (Wb), 4th ed. (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1982), vol. 4, 550–1, #1; *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache: Die Belegstellen* (Wb Belegst.), 4th ed. (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1982), vol. 4, 83.

27

Martinelli, “Geb et Nout dans les Textes des Pyramides,” 73. See also Nils Billing, *Nut, the Goddess of Life in Text and Iconography* (Uppsala, Sweden: Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Uppsala University, 2002), 92–3.

28

James P. Allen, “Reading a Pyramid,” in *Hommages à Jean Leclant*, ed.

Catherine Berger, Gisèle Clerc, and Nicolas Grimal, BdÉ, 106/1–4 (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1994), 24.

29

James P. Allen, “The Cosmology of the Pyramid Texts,” in *Religion and Philosophy in Ancient Egypt*, ed. William Kelly Simpson (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 25.

30

Edel, *Altägyptische Grammatik*, vol. 1, §§43–5, 19–20.

31

James P. Allen, “Old Egyptian,” in *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, ed. Julie Stauder-Porchet, Andréas Stauder, and Willeke Wendrich (Los Angeles: UCLA, 2015), 3. He notes the derivation of š from ḥ, thus reading Gardiner’s sign list W9 jug hieroglyph, ḥn, as šn and the word then as šnmt. See Erman and Grapow, Wb III, 382, 5; Erman and Grapow, Wb Belegst., 78, for an earlier reference.

32

Billing, *Nut*, 179–80, provides a solid discussion of commentators on the term ḥnmt wrt, noting also that a translation of the term ḥnmt wr as “sieve” needs to be considered, taking into consideration how the Egyptians viewed this object’s function. Billing does not address the phrase šnmt wrt at all.

33

Billing, *Nut*, 179.

34

Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, (2015), 356.

35

See Billing, *Nut*, 180.

36

For discussion, see Billing, *Nut*, 171–5. However, not all pyramid rpwt references refer specifically to Nut, as Billing notes.

37

Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 42, understands the

Heliopolitan (𓆎 wnt) to be Nut.

38

Nut as the heavenly cow is rare in the Pyramid Texts, but she appears quite centrally in the later text known in the modern world as “The Book of the Heavenly Cow.” Edward F. Wente, trans., “The Book of the Heavenly Cow,” in *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, ed. William Kelly Simpson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 289–98; Nadine Guilhou, “Myth of the Heavenly Cow,” *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (2010).

39

For definitions and references to nrt, see Wb II, 277, 3; Wb Belegst., 2/2, 407. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 242, treats the

hieroglyphs 𓆎 s nrt as one word, isnrt, while Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 214, treats the hieroglyphs as two words, 𓆎 s nrt, with the s serving as an enclitic particle, and translates nrt as “caretaker.” Billing, *Nut*, 17, points out that the hieroglyph for vulture also serves as the determinative and/or ideogram for “mother.” (An ideogram represents what the object actually is, while a determinative shows what the previous signs mean.)

40

Aylward Manley Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir. Part IV: The Tomb-Chapel of Pepi'onkh the Middle Son of Sebkhhotpe and Pekhernefert* (D, No. 2) (London: Egyptian Exploration Society, 1924), pl. IV. Naguib Kanawati, *The Cemetery of Meir I: The Tomb of Pepyankh the Middle, with Contributions by E. Alexakis, A. L. Mourad, S. Shafik, N. Victor and A. Woods*, Australian Centre for Egyptology: Reports (Oxford: Aris & Phillips, 2012), published this Sixth Dynasty tomb at Meir of Pepi-Ankh the Middle and stated that he carried Priest of Nut, 𓆎 m-ntr Nwt, as one of his titles on 12, 36.

41

Kanawati, *The Cemetery of Meir I*, pls. 3b, 76b; the former a photograph and the latter a line drawing, each of which shows the beard quite clearly. See Dilwyn Jones, *An Index of Ancient Egyptian Titles, Epithets, and Phrases of the Old Kingdom* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2000), vol. 1, 524, #1956, for other examples of the writing 𓆎 m ntr Nwnwt/nnwt, but in his example, Jones uses the female deity as the determinative rather than the very clear male deity in Pepi-Ankh the Middle's tomb.

42

Dieter Kurth, “Nut,” in *LdÄ* vol. 4, ed. Wolfgang Helck and Wolfhart Westendorf (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1981), 538 and 540, nn. 78–9.

43

Sethe, *Die Altägyptischen Pyramidentexte*, 1 and 2, vol. 1, PT 7; Bernard Mathieu, “La Distinction entre Textes des Pyramides et Textes des Sarcophages est-elle légitime?,” in *D'un monde à l'autre Textes des Pyramides & Textes des Sarcophages. Actes de la table ronde internationale “Textes des Pyramides versus Textes des Sarcophages” IFAO—24-26 septembre 2001*, ed. Susanne Bickel and Bernard Mathieu, Bibliothèque d'étude (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 2004), 249, n. 17, notes helpfully that the texts from the sarcophagus of Teti should be read in the following order: the base/bottom, north inside, south inside, west inside, east inside, and then the lid, thus PT 3, 4, 5, 7, 6, 1, 2. See also Billing, *Nut*, 153, n. 285.

44

Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 352. However, Allen provides no information about such a temple.

45

Faulkner, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 2, n. 2, 246; Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 266, 352.

46

Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 71.

47

Martinelli, "Geb et Nout dans les Textes des Pyramides," 77.

48

Recently, however, Antonio J. Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts of Nut: Analysis of Their Distribution and Role in the Old and Middle Kingdoms*, Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur., Beihefte (Hamburg: Helmut Buske Verlag, 2017), has just been published, which surely presents material on Nut to complement that of Billing with a very different focus and very welcome. Sadly I have not been able to access it and thus use it for this discussion, leaving that opportunity for the future.

49

Billing, *Nut*, 3, n. 4.

50

Leonard H. Lesko, "Nut," in OEAE, ed. Donald B. Redford (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 559; "Nut," in *The Ancient Gods Speak: A Guide to Egyptian Religion*, ed. Donald B. Redford (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 278.

51

Working early in the current millennium on the eastern frontier, a team led by James K. Hoffmeier unearthed evidence of Nut's presence at Tell el-Borg paired with Amun-Re; see James K. Hoffmeier, "Deities of the Eastern Frontier," in *Scribe of Justice: Egyptological Studies in Honour of Shafik Allam*, ed. Zahi A. Hawass, Khaled A. Daoud, and Ramadan B. Hussein, Supplément aux Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte; Cahier (Cairo: Ministry of State for Antiquities, 2011), 4–5. I would expect rather to see Hathor in this area.

52

This appearance suggests that the essential corpus of the Pyramid Texts themselves predated their inscribed presence in Unis's pyramid at the end of the Fifth Dynasty; indeed, we find that the texts were revised and expanded in the pyramids of Unis's successors, for a brief discussion of which, see Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 4–5.

53

Ann McFarlane and Anna-Latifa Mourad, eds., *Behind the Scenes: Daily Life in Old Kingdom Egypt* (London: Aris and Phillips, Ltd., 2012), 1.

54

For Sothis, *spdt*, see, for example, PT 302, §459b; 504, §1082d; 565,

§1428b-c; and 740; while for Orion, see, for example, PT 442, §§819c and 820d; 466, §883c; and 697 §2172a.

55

Virginia Lee Davis, "Identifying Ancient Egyptian Constellations," *Archaeoastronomy* 9 (Supplement to *Journal of the History of Astronomy*, Chalfont St. Giles 16) (1985): S102.

56

Arielle P. Kozloff, "Star-Gazing in Ancient Egypt," in *Hommages à Jean Leclant* (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1994), 170. Kozloff discusses spoons in the first part of this article, while looking at ritual implements more generally, but including spoons in Arielle P. Kozloff, "Ritual Implements and Related Statuettes," in *Egypt's Dazzling Sun: Amenhotep III and His World*, ed. Arielle P. Kozloff and Betsy M. Bryan (Cleveland, OH: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1992). In "75. Spoon with Sky Goddess Holding a Duck," Kozloff very specifically discusses one example of such a spoon.

57

Amanda-Alice Maravelia, "Cosmic Space and Archetypal Time: Depictions of the Sky-Goddess Nut in Three Royal Tombs of the New Kingdom and Her Relation to the Milky Way," *GM* 197 (2003): 56-7.

58

See Ronald A. Wells, "The Mythology of Nut and the Birth of Ra," *SAK* 19 (1992): 305-21, in which he presents his initial thinking about Nut and the Milky Way. Although a modern astronomer, Wells has researched and written extensively on ancient Egyptian astronomy, receiving two Fulbright scholarships for his interest in astronomy of ancient cultures. He served the first one at the University of Cairo, in Egypt, and at Helwan Observatory in 1983-4, and the second as a professor at the Institute of Archaeology, Egyptology Division, University of Hamburg in 1987-8.

59

Wells, "The Mythology of Nut," 308-9. See also Kurt Sethe, *Übersetzung und Kommentar zu den altägyptischen Pyramidentexten* (Glückstadt: J. J. Augustin, 1935-62), vol. 2, 20 on PT 262, §334c.

60

See R. A. Wells, "The Goddess Nut, Pharaoh's Guarantor of Immortality," *Varia Aegyptiaca* 10, no. 2/3 (1995): 205. In "The Mythology of Nut," 319, he had noted, almost parenthetically, that on what he calls "primitive figurines" of many cultures, a cross denotes the genital area, as well as in the later article, Ronald A. Wells, "Re and the Calendars," in *Revolutions in Time: Studies in Ancient Egyptian Calendrics*, ed. Anthony J. Spalinger (San Antonio, TX: Van Siclen Books, 1994), 5, and in his even later Ronald A. Wells, "Astronomy in Egypt," in *Astronomy before the Telescope*, ed. Christopher Walker (London: British Museum Press, 1996),

30. Peter Ucko states this is not the case for ancient Egypt in *Anthropomorphic Figurines of Predynastic Egypt and Neolithic Crete with Comparative Material from the Prehistoric Near East and Mainland Greece*, Royal Anthropological Institute Occasional Paper No. 24 (London: Andrew Szmidla, 1968), 192, 196, 202.

61

Wells, "Mythology of Nut," 316–17.

62

In an unpublished manuscript Wells shared with me, "Khufu's Pyramid and the Sanctuary of Thoth" (1995), 5, he interestingly does not mention that the dates he says that the sun penetrated Khufu's sarcophagus chamber, February 8 and November 2, also represent the thirty-nine weeks of the normal gestation period for humans.

63

Wells, "Mythology of Nut," 320. See also Wells, "The Goddess Nut," 206–10, for a solid discussion of these issues.

64

See Wells, "Mythology of Nut," 318–20, as well as later works for discussion of this dual myth.

65

PT 222, §208b; PT 245, §250a; PT 446, §825a; PT 452, §842d; PT 513, §§1173a, 1174a; PT 516, §1184b; PT 570, §1454a; PT 573, §1479c; PT 624, §1758a; PT 681, §§2037a, 2041a. Allen, "Cosmology of the Pyramid Texts," 16, n. 110.

66

As cited by Allen, "Cosmology of the Pyramid Texts," 16.

67

Allen, "Reading a Pyramid," 25.

68

Allen, "Cosmology of the Pyramid Texts," 17.

69

PT 219, §179a. The circle, read as the city sign, appears only in Unis's pyramid; the two other pyramids with that part of the text in Allen's concordance, Pepi II and Queen Neith, both show the *nw-jar*.

70

Faulkner, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 47, §179, and 48, n. 2.

71

Allen, "Cosmology of the Pyramid Texts," 17, n. 112, where he cites PT 428, §778a; PT 601, §1664a; PT 677, §2028a. Each of these examples of Nut's name with the circle rather than the *nw-jar* occurs in Pepi II's pyramid. Faulkner translates each of the additional references as Nut, noting only that he emends the circle to the *nw-jar* for §2028a.

72

PT 447, §828b; PT 452, §843; PT 485C, §1037a; PT 593, §1629.

73

PT 447, §828c; PT 450, §835; PT 593, §1629; PT 699, §2178b.

74

Allen, “Cosmology of the Pyramid Texts,” 17.

75

The owner has been suggested to be a very short-reigning king between Khafre and Menkaure. See Mark Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1997), 139.

76

I. E. S. Edwards, “Chephren’s Place among the Kings of the Fourth Dynasty,” in *The Unbroken Reed: Studies in the Culture and Heritage of Ancient Egypt in Honour of A. F. Shore*, ed. Christopher Eyre, Anthony Leahy, and Lisa Montagno Leahy (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1994), 99; I. E. S. Edwards, *The Pyramids of Egypt* (New York: Penguin, 1985), 142–5. Edwards bases his comments on the Abu Roash pyramid, i.e., on a belief rather than concrete evidence, and I have not found support by other commentators such as Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids*, 120, and Rainer Stadelmann, *Die ägyptischen Pyramiden Vom Ziegelbau zum Weltwunder*, aktualisierte und erweiterte ed., vol. 30, *Kulturgeschichte der Antiken Welt* (Mainz am Rhine: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1997), 126–7. Ahmed Fakhry, *The Pyramids*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 127–32.

77

See recently Douglas J Brewer, *Ancient Egypt: Foundations of a Civilization* (Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited, 2005), 55.

78

For locations, see Allen, “Reading a Pyramid,” 24–7 and figure 5; Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 10. In a carefully reasoned discussion, Harold Hayes argued against an absolute identification of particular spell types with specific location in the pyramids: Harold M. Hays, “Unreading the Pyramids,” *Bulletin de l’Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale* 109 (2009).

79

Allen, “Reading a Pyramid,” 24–5. Note that in “Unreading the Pyramids,” Hays disputes Allen’s analysis.

4 Isis and Nephthys

1

Griffiths, *Plutarch’s “De Iside et Osiride”*, §§12–19, 134–47; see also J. Gwyn Griffiths, *The Origins of Osiris and His Cult*, *Studies in the History of Religions* (Supplements to *Numen*), vol. 40, ed. M. Heerma Van Voss, E. J.

Sharpe, and R. J. Z. Werblowsky (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980), 1–40, for a discussion of various parts of myth itself.

2

Erik Hornung, “Versuch über Nephthys,” in *Studies in Pharaonic Religion and Society in Honour of J. Gwyn Griffiths*, ed. Alan B. Lloyd (London: Egyptian Exploration Society, 1992), 186.

3

Reginald Eldred Witt, *Isis in the Ancient World* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 14.

4

For an overall discussion, see Maria Münster, *Untersuchungen zur Göttin Isis vom Alten Reich bis zum Ende des Neuen Reiches* (Berlin: Verlag Bruno Hessling, 1968), 22–70.

5

Mark Smith, *Following Osiris: Perspectives on the Osirian Afterlife from Four Millennia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 114–15, 120–1.

6

The counts here are as accurate as possible from the names only; where epithets of one or the other or both goddesses occur without the names, such are not considered, and the numbers come from their presence in spells rather than consulting every text available, though texts were used.

7

Griffiths, *Plutarch’s “De Iside et Osiride,”* §§12–19, 134–47.

8

Griffiths, *Origins of Osiris*, 1–40.

9

Smith, *Following Osiris*, 5–7.

10

The “you” in this translation (and others in this chapter) refers to the deceased in direct address. For transcriptions of the Pyramid Texts, my primary source is Allen, *A New Concordance for the Pyramid Texts*. When I need it, I also use the hieroglyphic volumes by Sethe, *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte*; R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts Translated into English: Supplement of Hieroglyphic Texts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969); and the transliterations in Carrier, *Textes des Pyramides de l’Égypte ancienne*. The translations I use are those by Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*; Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (2015); and Carrier, *Textes des Pyramides de l’Égypte ancienne*.

11

See also PT 364, §610c.

12

Because the majority of the texts in the Pyramids involve the deceased

king, understood as a male, I will be using the masculine pronoun in this discussion unless I use a text specific to Queen Neith.

13

See also PT 619, §1750c, using the same words as that of PT 468, §898a.

14

See also PT 670, §1973b.

15

As Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, (2015), 204, n. 9, notes, these two actions are gestures of mourning.

16

See also PT 366, §630a.

17

See also PT 535, §1280c–d, and PT 694A, 2144a–b. In this latter, they find him on the shore.

18

See also PT 667B, §1951b.

19

See also Münster, *Untersuchungen zur Göttin*, 59, on PT 553, §§1361a–1362b.

20

See also PT 366, §628a; PT 219, §172a and 174a; and PT 357, §584a–c.

21

This particular text actually provides a litany in which each of the members of the Heliopolitan Ennead, along with various other individual and groups of gods, are addressed by the officiant, basically identifying the deceased as Osiris, as we have also seen in the discussion of Nut.

22

See also PT 664A, §1884.

23

For an easily accessible discussion, see Hollis, *The Ancient Egyptian “Tale of Two Brothers”* (1990), 118 & 227, nn. 123–126; Hollis, *The Ancient Egyptian “Tale of Two Brothers,”* (2008), 132 & nn. 123–126.

24

See Griffiths’s discussions in *Plutarch’s “De Iside et Osiride,”* §§12–19, 134–47; §§12–19, 134–47, and his *Origins of Osiris*, 1–40.

25

Additional texts include PT 230 §230a–d, PT 258, §308a–f, PT 259, §312a–f, and PT 531, §1254a–d. Three other texts with the word *ḏrt* do not refer to the sisters: PT 417, §741a–e, states that Ta’it, the goddess of weaving, will clothe the king in her name of “kite,” and in both PT 302, §463c and PT 573, §1484a–e, the king states he has flown or flown away from others as a kite.

26

The word *ḏrty* is the dual of *ḏrt*, so we are dealing with a pair of birds here.

27

See also PT 259, §312e.

28

Andrea Kucharek, “Isis und Nephthys als *ḏrt* -Vogel,” GM 218 (2008): 57, n. 2; she refers to the *ḥꜥt ḥꜥt* as of the family *Sternidae*, and calls it a *Greifvogel* or raptor bird. For more on this, see Patrick F. Houlihan, *The Birds of Ancient Egypt* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1988), 157–8. Note that Rudolf Anthes, “Egyptian Theology in the Third Millennium B.C.,” JNES 18, no. 3 (1959): 207, refers to the *ḥꜥt* as a *ḥꜥt*-kite.

29

Kucharek, “Isis und Nephthys,” 58.

30

Houlihan, *Birds of Ancient Egypt*, 38. He notes the representations of the birds as mourners of the dead and guards of the mummy, and thus as Isis and Nephthys.

31

Houlihan, *Birds of Ancient Egypt*, 36.

32

Houlihan, *Birds of Ancient Egypt*, 44–6, 149–50.

33

Kucharek, “Isis und Nephthys,” 60.

34

Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society and Nature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 40.

35

Joachim Spiegel, *Das Auferstehungsritual der Unas-Pyramide* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1971), 232, n. 6, in reference to PT 258.

36

Griffiths, *Origins of Osiris*, 50.

37

J. Sainte Fare Garnot, “Notes Philologiques sur les Textes des Pyramides,” RdÉ 8 (1951): 73. Cf., PT 532, §1256a; PT 593, §1630c; PT 694, §2144a.

38

Anthes, “Egyptian Theology in the Third Millennium B.C.,” 207, suggests that this text represents the sisters as birds waiting for the offal coming from the preparation of the corpse. Egyptian *mw* can suggest any of several kinds of liquid.

39

On Anubis, see Ursula Köhler, *Das Imiut: Untersuchungen zur Darstellung and Bedeutung eines mit Anubis verbundenen religiösen Symbols*, GOF IV. Reihe: Ägypten (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1975), vol. 2, 345–48; Susan Tower Hollis, *The Ancient Egyptian “Tale of Two Brothers”: The Oldest Fairy Tale in the World* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 73–83; idem, *Ancient Egyptian “Tale of Two Brothers,”* (2008), 74–87; Terence DuQuesne, *The Jackal Deities of Egypt I from the Archaic Period to Dynasty X*, vol. 1 (London: Da’th Scholarly Servies, Darengo Publications, 2005), especially §489–91.

40

U. Köhler, *Das Imiut*, 387–92; Hollis, *Ancient Egyptian “Tale of Two Brothers,”* (2008), 85–87.

41

Griffiths, *Origins of Osiris*, 27.

42

Siegfried Schott, “Bemerkungen zum ägyptischen Pyramidenkult,” in BBf, ed. Herbert Ricke (Cairo: Schweizerisches Institut für ägyptische Bauforschung und Altertumskunde in Kairo, 1950), 135ff. See also Münster, *Untersuchungen zur Göttin*, 22, n. 291.

43

Hermann Kees, “Excursus XXVII: Das Eindringen des Osiris in Die Pyramidentexte,” in *The Pyramid Texts in Translation and Commentary*, ed. Samuel A. B. Mercer (New York: Longmans Green & Co., 1952), 125–7.

44

Harco Willems, *Chests of Life: A Study of the Typology and Conceptual Development of Middle Kingdom, Standard Class Coffins* (Leiden: Ex Oriente Lux, 1988), 135.

45

Hartwig Altenmüller, “Zum Ursprung von Isis und Nephthys,” SAK 271 (1999): 13.

46

Griffiths, *Origins of Osiris*, 34.

47

Hartwig Altenmüller, “Etappen des Mythos: vom Ikon zum Epitheton, vom Epitheton zum Götternamen,” in *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2000*, ed. Miroslav Bárta and Jaromír Krejčí (Prague: Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Oriental Intitute, 2000), 305–7.

48

Dows Dunham and William Kelly Simpson, *The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III G 7530–7540*, ed. William Kelly Simpson (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1974), 8, figure 8. See also George A. Reisner, *A History of the Giza Necropolis*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942),

315.

49

Ann Macy Roth, *A Cemetery of Palace Attendants Including g 2084–2099, g 2230+2231, and g 2240*, ed. Peter Der Manuelian and William Kelly Simpson (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1995); T. G. H. James, *Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae Etc. Part 1* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1961), 29–32, pl. XXIX, 2. See also for discussion, Hartwig Altenmüller, who incorporates significant descriptions of the bed scenes in “Auferstehungsritual und Geburtsmythos,” *SAK* 24 (1997): 2–4.

50

Naguib Kanawati, *Tombs at Giza, Volume I: Kaiemankh (G4561) and Seshemnefer I (G4940)*, Australian Centre for Egyptology (Warminster, UK: Aris and Phillips Ltd., 2001), 33 and pl. 32, http://www.gizapyramids.org/static/pdf%20library/kanawati_tombs_1.pdf.

51

Selim Hassan, *Excavations at Giza IV (1932–33) the Pyramid Complex: Queen Khent-Kawes* (Cairo: Government Press, Bulâq, 1943), 140, figure 81; Kanawati, *Tombs at Giza, Volume I*, pl. 32, http://www.gizapyramids.org/static/pdf%20library/kanawati_tombs_1.pdf; and Prentice Duell and the Sakkara Expedition, *The Mastaba of Mereruka Part I Chambers a 1–10 Plates 1–103* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938); Prentice Duell and the Sakkarah Expedition, *The Mastaba of Mereruka Part II Chambers a 11–13 Tomb Chamber Exterior Plates 104–219* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938), pl. 141.

52

John A. Wilson, “Funeral Services of the Egyptian Old Kingdom,” *JNES* 3, no. 4 (1944): 201–18; Henry G. Fischer, “Representations of *Dryt*-Mourners in the Old Kingdom,” in *Egyptian Studies I: Varia* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1976), 39–50.

53

William Stevenson Smith, *A History of Egyptian Sculpture and Painting in the Old Kingdom*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1949), 211, 213, figures 84a and 84b. William Kelly Simpson, *The Mastabas of Qar and Idu. G 7101 and 7102*, ed. William Kelly Simpson (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1976), 5, pl. VII, figure 24, 21, pl. XVIII, figure 35.

54

Kanawati, *Tombs at Giza, Volume I*, 15–18; Alexandra Woods, “Contributions to a Controversy: A Date for the Tomb of mastaba of K³(=j)-m-[Ⓜ]nh at Giza,” *JEA* 95 (2009): 305–21.

55

Wilson, “Funeral Services,” 206, pl. XIII; Nigel Strudwick, *The Administration of Egypt in the Old Kingdom*, ed. W. V. Davies, *Studies in Egyptology* (London: KPI, 1985), 87–8.

56

See also PT 258, §308e; PT 259, §312e.

57

Münster, *Untersuchungen zur Göttin*, 23, n. 296.

58

Fischer, “Representations of *Ḍryt*-Mourners,” 40–1. See also Wilson, “Funeral Services.”

59

The word *ḏryt* is a variant way of expressing the transliteration of hieroglyphic text.

60

Fischer, “Representations of *Ḍryt*-Mourners,” 45–9. Fischer’s study focuses only on the female figures, omitting any possible examples of males termed *ḏrt*, though in my limited research I have found none.

61

Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, G1.

62

See also PT 258, §308a–f; PT 259, §312a–f; PT 531, §1254a–d.

63

See also PT 532, §1255b–c.

64

Although in non-royal contexts from the Old Kingdom, the *ḏrty*-mourners are not and could not be identified with Isis and Nephthys, on a Middle Kingdom model boat, the two mourners carry the following names: at the head of the coffin on the boat as “the Nephthys *ḥtp-ḥth-ḥr*, justified” and at the foot end is ... the Isis *ḥtpt*, justified, for which see Fischer, “Representations of *Ḍryt*-Mourners,” 42–3 and figure 6.

65

Fischer, “Representations of *Ḍryt*-Mourners,” 42–3, pl. XIII, figure 6. While it is clear that the personal names do not relate to the deceased, I wonder if they relate to a specific family member or specifically designated women who assist with the rituals of mourning or preparation of the body for burial as is so common in traditional cultures in all times and all places.

66

Although Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, (2015), 361, describes the Mooring Post and Moorers as a pair of unidentified constellations, a quite logical explanation links them to securing boats.

67

See also PT 665D, §1927c, line 54; and PT *728, line 15. The line numbers here refer to the concordance materials. Allen includes text from Pepi I, PT *728, which was not part of Sethe’s text and not part of Faulkner’s translation. Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, (2015), 120. He

includes the epithets as present in PT 718, §2232d–e and PT 720, §2239a (only Isis as mooring post), drawing on additional publications resulting from discoveries made in years following Sethe’s initial work.

68

Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 207, n, 89.

69

Willems, *Chests of Life*, 135.

70

Barbara L. Begelsbacher-Fischer, *Untersuchungen zur Götterwelt des Alten Reiches in Spiegel der Privatgräber der IV und V Dynastie* (Freiberg: Universitätsverlag and Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1981), 268.

71

Kanawati, *The Cemetery of Meir I* 12, 36, pl. 76b; Allam, *Beiträge zum Hathorkult* 34; Münster, *Untersuchungen zur Göttin*, 159.

72

Münster, *Untersuchungen zur Göttin*, 158–89. For more on the places Münster mentions, see Christine Favard-Meeks, “Behbeit El-Hagara,” in *Encyclopedia of the Archaeology of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Kathryn A. Bard (London: Routledge, 1999), and Wolfgang Helck, *Die altägyptischen Gaue*, ed. Wolfgang Röllig (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1974), 179–82.

73

Digitizing Kaplony’s volumes—Peter Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der Ägyptischen Frühzeit I*, ed. Wolfgang Helck and Eberhard Otto (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1963); Peter Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der Ägyptischen Frühzeit II*, ed. Wolfgang Helck and Eberhard Otto (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1963); Peter Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der Ägyptischen Frühzeit III*, ed. Wolfgang Helck and Eberhard Otto (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1963); and Peter Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der Ägyptischen Frühzeit. Supplement*, ed. Wolfgang Helck and Eberhard Otto (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1964)—would be a wonderful resource for further study, especially if additional material could be added to it as well, notably from the ongoing archaeological work being done at Predynastic, Early Dynastic, and Old Kingdom sites with modern techniques and analysis.

74

Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der Ägyptischen Frühzeit I*, 432, 465, 610; Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der Ägyptischen Frühzeit II*, 1134.

75

Referring to such a seat as a throne begs the question of when a seat occupied by a leader might be termed a throne.

76

Kaplony regularly interpolates the “𓆎” in the name which may or may

not be appropriate given the level of writing in these very early periods. In this case, he does translate the title, an office, as

“Vermögensverwaltung, ‘pr-ⁱht’ ”; *Die Inschriften der Ägyptischen Frühzeit II*, 1134. The seal itself, in Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der Ägyptischen Frühzeit III*,

abb. 302, depicts a sealing carrying the hieroglyphs reading pr-ⁱht and the hieroglyph for “seat, place” (Gardner Q1) actually st rather than jst. Significantly the seal shows human figures. This sealing thus represents

a good example of his interpolation of an “ⁱ” or perhaps “^j.” The title might then read “property manager of the place.”

77

Kaplony treats this one as a personal name in *Die Inschriften der Ägyptischen Frühzeit I*, 465, while referring also to a specific Pyramid Text, PT 245, §251a, as meaning “to take the proper place,” 465. Neither Faulkner, Allen, nor Carrier translates the “st” as Isis. Faulkner, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 58; Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, (2015), 44; Claude Carrier, *Textes des Pyramides de l’Égypte ancienne II: Textes de la Pyramide de Pépy Ier* (Paris: Cybele, 2009), 1053.

78

Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der Ägyptischen Frühzeit I*, 432.

79

Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der Ägyptischen Frühzeit I*, 376. He gives no translation for smr, stating simply that the meaning of smr titles is unclear. In the same publication, on 432, Kaplony speaks of this kind of inscription as a personal name but again does not attempt to go further with it.

80

Adolf Erman and Hermann Grapow, *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*, 4th ed. (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1982) (Wb) vol. 4, 138: 6, 7, 8, 11.

81

Dilwyn Jones, *An Index of Ancient Egyptian Titles, Epithets, and Phrases of the Old Kingdom* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2000), 891–8, provides examples from the Old Kingdom suggesting the word acts as a title, often forming parts of a more involved title.

82

Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der Ägyptischen Frühzeit I*, 432; Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der Ägyptischen Frühzeit III*, abb. 408.

83

Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der Ägyptischen Frühzeit I*, 610; Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der Ägyptischen Frühzeit III*, abb. 80.

84

Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der Ägyptischen Frühzeit I*, 610.

85

Kurt Sethe, *Urgeschichte und Älteste Religion der Ägypter* (Leipzig:

Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, 1930), 98, §118; a concept repeated by Erhart Graefe, “Nephthys,” in *LdÄ*, ed. Wolfgang Helck and Eberhard Otto (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1980), 458.

86

Altenmüller, “Zum Ursprung von Isis und Nephthys,” 5–6; Altenmüller, “Etappen des Mythos,” 311–13.

87

Hartwig Altenmüller, “Zu Isis und Osiris,” in *Weg Öffnen: Festschrift Für Rolf Gundlach zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Mechthild Schade-Busch (Weisbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1996). He also presents these and related ideas in several related articles, notably, “Auferstehungsritual und Geburtsmythos,” “Zum Ursprung von Isis und Nephthys,” and “Etappen des Mythos.”

88

The aleph (𐤀) and yod (𐤅) inserted before the *st* reflect later writings of the goddess’s name. Although much discussion about the use of these letters in her name has occurred, since they apparently do not appear in the writings of her name in the Pyramid Texts themselves, e.g., Wb IV, 8, II and 13; PT 269, §379 ; PT 1140c; and PT 519, §1214b, I have chosen to work with the bare *st* as it stands, following the discussion of the topic by Edel, *Altägyptische Grammatik*, vol. 1, §144.

89

st is defined in Gardiner’s *Grammar* as “seat,” Q1; *Egyptian Grammar*, 500.

90

James P. Allen, “The Name of Osiris (and Isis),” *Lingua Aegyptia: Journal of Egyptian Studies* 21 (2013): 9. See also Griffiths, *Origins of Osiris*, 87–95, 237–9.

91

See, for example, Sethe, *Urgeschichte und älteste Religion*, 85–6, §102, and 98, §118. Interestingly, however, what was meant by the “Great Throne” is never defined or addressed. Does it refer to the kinds of thrones, highly decorated and very symbolic of the ruling power in the modern era in Europe and elsewhere in the world?

92

Edward Brovarski, “An Inventory List from ‘Covington’s Tomb’ and Nomenclature for Furniture in the Old Kingdom,” in *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson*, ed. Peter Der Manuelian (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1996), vol. 1, 144. See also H. G. Fischer, “Stuhl,” in *LdÄ*, ed. Wolfgang Helck and Wolfhart Westendorf (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1985), vol. 6, 92, for a comment on *st* as denoting a seat but a specific word for throne; and see H. G. Fischer, “Bett,” in *LdÄ*, ed. Wolfgang Helck and Eberhard Otto (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1973), vol. 1, 767–8, for a discussion of *Bett*.

93

Brovarski, "An Inventory List," 142–4; Altenmüller, "Etappen des Mythos," 309–10. For examples, see Dunham and Simpson, *The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III*, figure 7, and Junker, *Giza IV: Bericht über die von der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien auf Gemeinsame Kosten mit Dr. Wilhelm Pelizaeus† Unternommen Grabungen auf dem Friedhof des Alten Reichs bei den Pyramiden von Gîza. Die Mastaba des K³jm³ nh (Kai-Em-Anch)*, Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien Philosophisch-Historische Klasse Denkschriften (Leipzig: Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky A. G., 1940), abb. 10 A; Hassan, *Excavations at Gîza IV*, figure 81. Altenmüller provides an extensive list in "Etappen des Mythos," 306–7.

94

"Etappen des Mythos," 314. See also Roth, *A Cemetery of Palace Attendants*, figure 187 and pl. 92.

95

Altenmüller, "Zu Isis und Osiris," 9–11, 14–16; Altenmüller, "Zum Ursprung von Isis und Nephthys," 7. Allen, "The Name of Osiris (and Isis)," takes a linguistic approach which is interesting, suggesting that what we have here in Isis's name is the female principle and in Osiris's name the corresponding male engendering principle.

96

Altenmüller, "Zu Isis und Osiris," 12–14; Altenmüller, "Zum Ursprung von Isis und Nephthys," 5–6; Altenmüller, "Etappen des Mythos," 312.

97

For full discussion of how they are written and their usual locations, see Altenmüller, "Etappen des Mythos," 312. See also Silke Grallert, "Die Fugeninschriften auf Särgen des Mittleren Reiches," SAK 23 (1996): 155–6; Silke Grallert, "The Mitre Inscriptions on Coffins of the Middle Kingdom: A New Set of Texts for Rectangular Coffins?" in *Life and Afterlife in Ancient Egypt during the Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period*, ed. Silke Grallert and Wolfram Grajetzki (London: Goldhouse Publications, 2007), 53–4. Grallert's 1996 article provides visual depictions of the locations and how they appear.

98

Grallert, "Die Fugeninschriften auf Särgen des Mittleren Reiches," and Grallert, "The Mitre Inscriptions." From a critical point of view, it is important to note that Altenmüller uses Middle Kingdom evidence in his argument and fails to note that change in concepts and traditions and more occur over time from the Pyramic Texts to the coffins and language of the Middle Kingdom. Although with a very different argument, Osing too approaches Isis's name through the use of Middle Kingdom and later sources and does not account for the Old Kingdom use. See Jürgen Osing, "Isis und Osiris," MDAIK 30 (1974).

99

Altenmüller's discussion actually provides an excellent example of a Middle Kingdom reference and iconography that occasionally present Isis as the head and Nephthys at the foot. As in so many things in this rich culture, exceptions occur regularly.

100

See also PT 690, §2098b.

101

Brovarski, "An Inventory List," 145, referring to PT 250, §267c; Wb IV, 1.

102

Fischer, "Stuhl," 97, n. 1. Earlier Fischer noted that the "bier was nothing other than the everyday bed, to which at least since the Sixth Dynasty a pair of lion heads were attached," in Fischer, "Bett," 768.

103

Wb IV, 6 [21].

104

See James F. Romano, "Sixth Dynasty Royal Sculpture," in *Les Critères de datation stylistiques à l'ancien empire*, ed. Nicholas-Christophe Grimal (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1998), 248–51, figures 41–53; Gay Robins, *The Art of Ancient Egypt*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 66–7.

105

This and the previous statue both exemplify what might be described succinctly as her life-giving and protector roles, significant in that they appear regularly over such a long period of time. In fact, a number of my students over many years have asked about or noted the similarity of these figures to the typical Madonna and child within the Christian tradition. Whether one can really consider a direct relationship is arguable since the poise is one of the mother and child from all times and all places.

106

Sixth Dynasty *Sed*-festival statuette of King Pepi I, the second king of the dynasty, Brooklyn Museum, accession number 1939.120. See Romano, "Sixth Dynasty Royal Sculpture," 240–2, figures 8–19; and Robins, *Art of Ancient Egypt*, 64–6.

107

Griffiths, *Origins of Osiris*, 87.

108

Geraldine Pinch, *Magic in Ancient Egypt*, rev. ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), 68; Griffiths, *Origins of Osiris*, 87.

109

Altenmüller, "Zum Ursprung von Isis und Nephthys," 8–12.

110

Sethe, *Urgeschichte und älteste Religion*, 98, §118.

111

Faulkner, *Concise Dictionary*, 165.

112

Wb III, 1, 5.

113

Altenmüller, “Zum Ursprung von Isis und Nephthys,” 9. See also Bonnet, 519.

114

Altenmüller, “Zum Ursprung von Isis und Nephthys,” 10.

115

Patricia Spencer, *The Egyptian Temple: A Lexographical Study* (Boston: Kegan Paul International, 1984), 24.

116

Spencer, *The Egyptian Temple*, 27.

117

Hornung, “Versuch über Nephthys,” 186.

118

Hornung, “Versuch über Nephthys,” 186.

119

Hornung, “Versuch über Nephthys,” 186.

120

Hornung, “Versuch über Nephthys,” 186. Münster, however, suggests the wording of the Pyramid Texts leaves open to question exactly what is meant in terms of the respective positions of the two goddesses; see *Untersuchungen zur Göttin*, 31.

121

Hornung, “Versuch über Nephthys,” 186.

122

Hornung, “Versuch über Nephthys,” 187. He also notes a representation from a Twenty-First Dynasty mortuary treasure from Tanis, where there is a “reversal” of the “traditional order,” considered to present Isis on the left and Nephthys on the right. The traditional thinking is that the man on the right serves as a protector/support, and so when the Nephthys appears on Osiris’s left, she outranks her sister. The presence of the male in any context makes him the dominant figure, as well explained by Gay Robins, “Some Principles of Compositional Dominance and Gender Hierarchy in Egyptian Art,” *JARCE* 31 (1994). See also Henry George Fischer, *Egyptian Women of the Old Kingdom and of the Heracleopolitan Period*, 2nd ed. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000), chapter 2; and Heinrich Schäfer, *Principles of Egyptian Art*, ed. Emma Brunner-Traut, trans. John Baines (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 173–4.

123

Juan Carlos Moreno Garcia, *Hwt et le milieu rural égyptien du III^e millénaire, économie, administration et organisation territoriale* (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, Editeur, 1999), 60.

124

Jessica Lévai, "Aspects of the Goddess Nephthys, Especially During the Graeco-Roman Period in Egypt" (Ph.D. diss., Brown University, 2007), 34.

125

Münster, *Untersuchungen zur Göttin*, 31.

126

Münster, *Untersuchungen zur Göttin*, 35. She makes this statement, however, with the understanding that "Isis was the incarnation of the throne," a definition with which this discussion takes issue.

127

A number of Middle Kingdom coffins show Isis at the head and Nephthys as the foot, such that by the New Kingdom, Isis regularly appears at the foot and Nephthys at the head, though it is unclear why this shift occurs. Altenmüller's presentation on these positions is rather confused, for which see Altenmüller, "Zum Ursprung von Isis und Nephthys," 8. See Grallert, "Die Fugeninschriften auf Särgen des Mittleren Reiches," 155–6.

128

My counts here, using the goddesses' names in the index of divinities in Faulkner's translation (1982) are as accurate as possible; I do not count any epithets that lack the names of one or the other or both goddesses, and my counts come from their presence in spells rather than consulting every text available. They do not include any materials from pyramids other than those of the five kings: Unis, Teti, Pepi I, Merenre, and Pepi II, using only those in Faulkner's edition. Thus the count is outdated in some considerable respects.

129

See also PT 538, §1302b; PT 669, §1964d.

130

For a readily available discussion of this ritual see Ann Macy Roth, "Fingers, Stars, and the 'Opening of the Mouth': The Nature and Function of the ntrwj-Blades," JEA 79 (1993).

131

For example, PT 20, §11a–12c; PT 21, §13a–14d; PT 22, §15; PT 670, §1983e.

132

See also PT 593, §1635b–1636b and PT 518, §1199c, a one-sentence note about Osiris impregnating Isis. Others might appear as work on the texts and excavations continue. The procreation of Horus is critical to

the resurrection/revival of Osiris in the next world, and the mouth-opening ritual, commonly referred to as the Opening of the Mouth Ritual, represents allowing breath to enter the body, enabling it to live again.

133

PT 366, §§632a–633b. This text appears again as a variant in the pyramids of Pepi I, Merenre, Pepi II, and Neith as PT 593, §§1635b–1637b.

134

Allen explains, “The Egyptian word [*hms*] is derived from the verb

meaning ‘sit,’ [*hms*^f] referring to Isis’s lowering herself as a bird onto the recumbent mummy of Osiris.” *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, (2015), 99, n. 22. In other words, Osiris presumably lifted Isis onto his phallus.

135

Sothis, or Sirius, is the dog star which heralds the inundation and the New Year, and it is likely that Osiris is viewed as Orion in this case; Griffiths, *Origins of Osiris*, 12. While Griffiths limits himself to the suggestion that in this passage one finds the evolution of a third generation of the kingship, Osiris, Horus, and the young Horus, I suspect that the expected fertility of the New Year—with its sense of renewal and the new beginning with the conception of Horus-Soped by Osiris—points more directly to the actual accession of the king, since the person assuming the position could not be known precisely until the actual act, either in this world or the next (and the one reflects the other).

136

Both this spell and its variant, PT 593, §1635b–1636b, appear on several Middle Kingdom coffins, for which see James P. Allen, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts Volume 8: Middle Kingdom Copies of Pyramid Texts*, ed. Leslie Schramer and Thomas G. Urban (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 315–19, 395–404.

137

Isis with plumage, that is as winged, recalls her presence in the Pyramid Texts as a *drt* or *hꜥt* bird.

138

Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings, Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 83. The hieroglyphic text was published in facsimile by Alexandre Moret, “La Légende d’osiris à l’époque thébaine d’après l’hymne à Osiris du Louvre,” BIFAO 30 (1931). This part of the text appears on pages 41 and 43. See also Jan Assmann, *Ägyptische Hymnen und Gebete: Übersetzt, Kommentiert und Eingeleitet Zweite, Verbesserte und Erweiterte Auflage*, ed. Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger (Göttingen: Vanenhoeck &

Ruprecht, 1999), 479–80; and André Barucq and François Daumas, *Hymnes et Prières de l'Égypte ancienne* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1980), 94–5.

139

Jean-Claude Goyon, “Le cérémonial de glorification d’Osiris du papyrus du Louvre I, 3079 (Colonnes 110 à 112) [Avec 5 Planches],” BIFAO 65 (1965).

140

Fayza Mohamed Hussein Haikal, *Two Hieratic Funerary Papyri of Nesmin: Part Two: Translation and Commentary*, Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca 15 (Brussels: Fondation égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1972).

141

My translation of P. Louvre I, 3079 110, 9–10, from Fayza Mohamed Hussein Haikal, *Two Hieratic Funerary Papyri of Nesmin: Part One: Introduction, Transcriptions and Plates* (Brussels: Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1970), 49.

142

And of course PT 593, §1637b.

143

Wilhelm Spiegelberg, “Varia,” ZÄS 53 (1917); Hermann Kees, *Der Götterglaube im Alten Ägypten*, 4th ed. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1956/1980), 256; Griffiths, *Origins of Osiris*; Haikal, *Two Hieratic Funerary Papyri of Nesmin: Part Two*.

144

See also PT 690, §1703c.

145

The reference to “your lactating sister Isis” in PT 42, §32b clearly reflects the Heoliopolitan cosmology in which Horus is the second born of the children of Geb and Nut, thus providing evidence that this tradition was still very much alive at the time of the commitment of the mortuary texts to the walls of the royal pyramids, as this text appears in the five kings’ pyramids of the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties as well as in the pyramids of Queens Neith and Iput II (also a wife of Pepi II).

146

PT 661, §1873a–b; PT 663, §1183a.

147

ḥnw mnjw. See Wb II, 75, 15–16. A three-dimensional space, a shrine.

148

Is this a scribal error? Possibly, but the hieroglyphs, despite damage, show Neith’s characteristic double-bow in a case.

149

See both Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, (2015), 22, and Allen, *A New Concordance for the Pyramid Texts*, vol.I.

150

Rory B. Egan, "Isis: Goddess of the Oikoumene," in *Goddesses in Religions and Modern Debate*, ed. Larry Hurtado (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1990).

151

Sethe, *Urgeschichte und älteste Religion*, §118.

152

See also PT 553, §1354a. These in addition to the previously mentioned text in which Isis nurses 𓆎t , the deceased, while Nephthys suckles him, $\text{sn}k\text{w}$, PT 268, §371c.

153

In this text, Isis is called the deceased's mother, mjwt .

154

Faulkner, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 187.

155

Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, (2015), 159.

156

Carrier, *Textes des Pyramides de l'Égypte ancienne II*, 888–9.

157

Wb IV, 590.

158

Perhaps Nephthys represents a sense of fertility that lacks in her spouse. Certainly there is a later mythic strand in which she lay with Osiris and conceived Anubis, for which see Hollis, *Ancient Egyptian "Tale of Two Brothers"* (1990), 72–73; Hollis, *Ancient Egyptian "Tale of Two Brothers"* (2008), 73.

159

Faulkner, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 200; Carrier, *Textes des Pyramides de l'Égypte ancienne II*, 953–4; Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, (2015), 172.

160

As Allen notes, giving the finger represents a gesture of cursing, in this case by the little finger, in Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 207, n. 102.

161

It is interesting that neither Scott N. Morschauser, *Threat-Formulae in Ancient Egypt: A Study of the History, Structure, and Use of Threats and Curses in Ancient Egypt* (Baltimore, MD: Halgo, Inc., 1991), nor Katarina Nordh, *Aspects of Ancient Egyptian Curses and Blessings: Conceptual Background and Transmission*, ed. Rostislav Holthoer and Pontus Hellström (Uppsala, Sweden: Acta Universitatis Upsliensis, 1996), discusses this text, despite its threats. And when Zandee refers to some of the sections (§1278–9, 205, 214, and 272) and elsewhere in this same spell, he discusses the words individually rather than within their full context; Jan Zandee,

Death as an Enemy (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960).

162

The texts which identify Horus as the deceased surely reflect pre-Osirian materials and thus reflect the royal mortuary rituals that precede the presence of Osiris and his appearance in the mid Fifth Dynasty.

163

See 'Nut's Activities' (p.71) in this volume.

164

R. O. Faulkner, "The Bremner-Rhind Papyrus: I. A. The Songs of Isis and Nephthys," JEA 22, no. 2 (1936).

165

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